

# THE GIRL SCOUTS'

## GOOD TURN

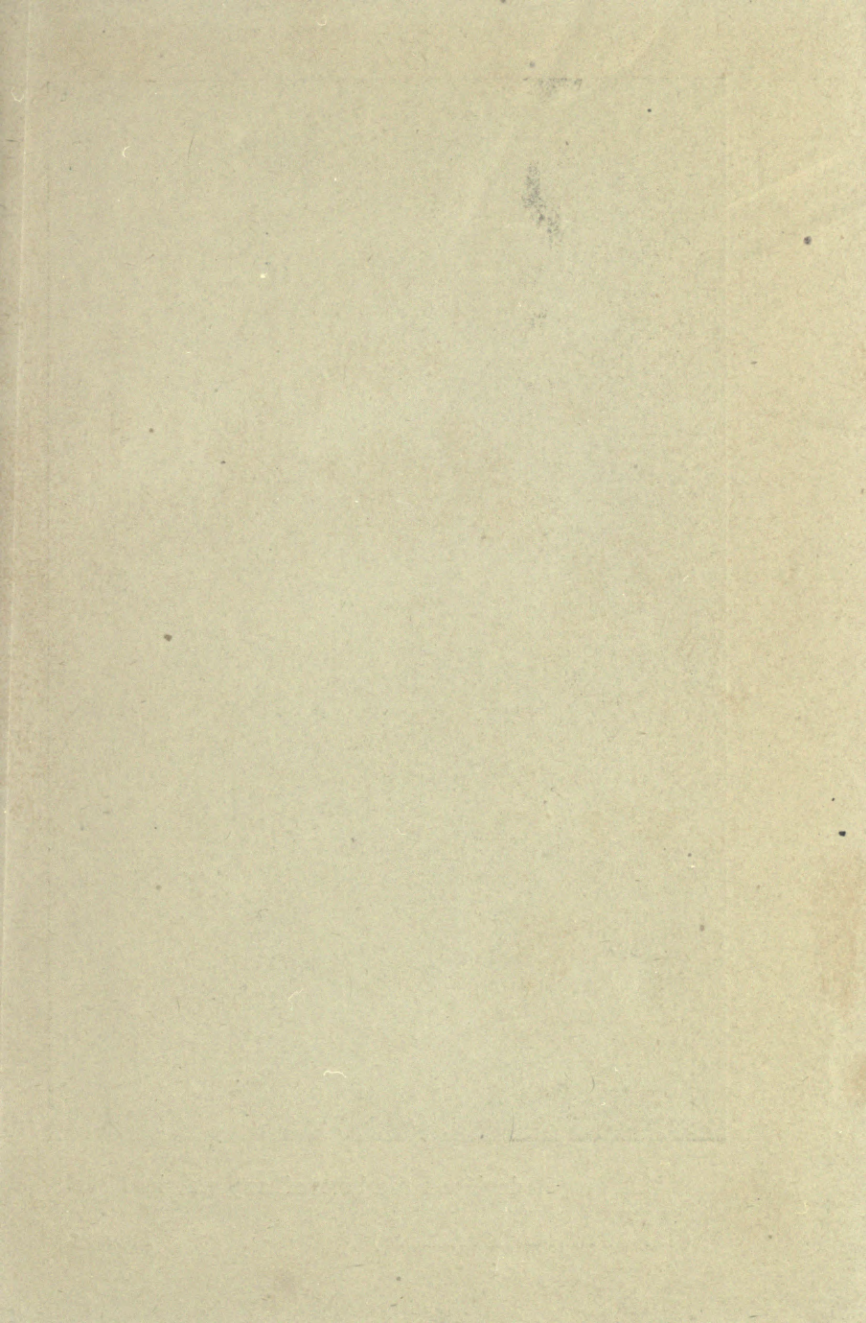


EDITH LAVELL

Mary Bob Buegers  
from  
Grandma Buegers.









Marjorie had played the best of anyone since the beginning of the term.  
(The Girl Scouts' Good Turn)

# THE GIRL SCOUTS' GOOD TURN

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By EDITH LAVELL

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AUTHOR OF

*"The Girl Scouts at Miss Allen's School," "The Girl  
Scouts at Camp," "The Girl Scouts' Canoe  
Trip," "The Girl Scouts' Rivals."*



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THE  
GIRL SCOUTS SERIES

A Series of Stories for Girl Scouts

By EDITH LAVELL

The Girl Scouts at Miss Allen's School

The Girl Scouts at Camp

The Girl Scouts' Good Turn

The Girl Scouts' Canoe Trip

The Girl Scouts' Rivals

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THE GIRL SCOUTS' GOOD TURN

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# THE GIRL SCOUTS' GOOD TURN

## CHAPTER I

### THE RECEPTION

“And it’s somewhere there in fairyland——  
It’s where the rainbow ends!”

MARJORIE WILKINSON hummed softly to herself as she skipped from place to place, adding the finishing touches to the effect she and her committee had planned.

It was the first Saturday of the regular fall term at Miss Allen’s Boarding School. The girls were back again in their old places—all except the seniors of the previous year, who had graduated—and now the sophomores were preparing for the first social event of the year, their reception to the freshmen. Marjorie Wilkinson was chairman.

The clock struck seven, and she stood perfectly still in the center of the floor, viewing the result of their work. The bare, ugly gymnasium had disappeared; in its place was a little winter scene from

fairylund. Cedar branches, decked with flakes of artificial snow, and great white snowbanks, completely hid the walls from view. Spread over the floor, except for a space in the middle reserved for dancing, were pine needles and more patches of snow; and everywhere frosty tinsel glimmered in the soft, blue light of the covered electric bulbs.

The girls walked lightly and spoke softly, as if they feared that by some rude noise they might break the magic spell of the scene.

Marjorie, wearing her first real party dress—a pale blue georgette, with a silver sash, and a narrow silver band about her forehead, seemed in perfect harmony with the blue and silver of the scene. But, standing gracefully erect, with one satin-slipped foot extended in front of the other, and her head thrown back as she contemplated the effect, she did not think of the impression she was making. It was not until Lily Andrews, her room-mate, drew her attention to her costume that she thought of herself.

“Your dress is just lovely with the rest of the effect,” she said, putting her arm affectionately through Marjorie’s.

“Thanks, Lil,” replied the other girl carelessly. “Isn’t the room wonderful? I think it’s the prettiest scene, off the stage, that I ever saw!”

“It’s lovely. They certainly can’t help liking it, can they?”

"Poor freshies!" sighed Marjorie, with the infinite wisdom of the sophomore. "Remember how green we were?"

"Indeed, I do—and that first reception, when they still had the sorority! Didn't we just think Frances Wright and Ethel Todd were nothing short of goddesses? I wonder whether these freshmen know about our Girl Scout troop, and are as eager to make it as we were the sorority!"

But before Lily could reply, the orchestra, three players who came from the city, entered the room, and Marjorie hurried over to give them the final directions. When she turned around again, Lily had vanished; but near her stood Ruth Henry, her old friend from her home town, who had played the part of jealous rival ever since the girls had been at Miss Allen's.

"Hello, Marj!" She greeted her with the old familiarity; indeed, the girls were good friends now, in spite of all that had happened the previous year. "Your dress is sweet," she added.

"I'm glad you like it, Ruth. Yours is a dream, too!"

Ruth sat down on a chair nearby, and beckoned Marjorie to sit beside her.

"The freshies aren't here yet," she remarked. "We might as well rest. I want to ask you something."

Marjorie complied with her request as far as her

physical presence was concerned. But her eyes wandered from one place to another over the room, reviewing the effect, and her mind was drifting from what Ruth was saying. But the latter hardly noticed her preoccupation, so intent was she upon her own interests.

"Listen, Marj!" She reduced her voice to an intimate tone. "Have you thought about our class president?"

"Our president?"

"Yes—not Doris Sands—of course, she is still president; but what I mean is—our next president!"

"No, I haven't," replied Marjorie, absently. "I never gave it a thought. Why?"

"Well, I have; and our class meeting is Monday evening, you know. I think we ought to talk it over, for it's important to get just the right girl."

"I suppose it is," admitted Marjorie, glancing nervously towards the door. "Why do you s'pose they're so late, Ruth?"

"Oh, they'll be along soon," replied Ruth, with annoyance. "It's hardly half-past seven."

But Marjorie could not content herself to sit still any longer.

"Well, it'll be hard to get anybody as good as Doris," she said, rising. "I wish it weren't against the Constitution to elect her over again."

"I hear my name being taken in vain," said a pleasant voice, and the girls looked up to

see their pretty class president just behind them.

"Pardon me for interrupting your tete-a-tete, but do you know who has charge of the games?" she asked.

"Lily," replied Marjorie. "But you needn't worry; she's all prepared."

"Good!" exclaimed Doris, glad to dismiss the matter from her mind. Then, "I certainly am crazy to get acquainted with the freshmen. I know most of them by sight now, and I've talked to two or three, but I don't know any of their names."

"Won't it be fun to pick out the Girl Scouts?" remarked Ruth.

"But we don't *pick* them, Ruth," protested Marjorie; "they pick themselves."

At this moment half a dozen freshmen entered the open door of the gymnasium, and the girls hastened over to welcome them and to make them feel at home. They walked in shyly, hesitating just inside the door, for everything was new and strange to them.

Marjorie was seized with a great longing to seek out all the retiring ones and tell them that she would be their friend. But perhaps some of the freshmen might resent this, and interpret her attitude as condescending. So she tried to content herself with entertaining as many different girls as she could, and remembering as many names as possible.

The first freshman to make any definite impres-

sion upon her was Florence Evans, sister of Edith Evans, the senior who had served as Acting Lieutenant of the troop at camp, and who still held that office. It was Florence that introduced herself to Marjorie. Neither bold nor shy, with a little more than the ordinary amount of good looks, she seemed unconsciously to possess the poise of her older sister.

"I have heard so much about you, Marjorie," she said, not hesitating in the least to use the older girl's first name; "Edith told me all about your winning the canoe at camp. And I have been so anxious to meet you!"

"Thanks," replied Marjorie, sincerely flattered that the senior whom she admired so much had seen fit to mention her name at home. "We certainly did have a wonderful time during the summer!"

"I'm crazy to be a Girl Scout!" said Florence, enthusiastically. "My room-mate, Mildred Cavin"—she nodded toward an attractive girl a few feet away, talking to Lily—"my room-mate and I talk of nothing else."

Ruth, who overheard the remark, smiled with conscious self-importance; but Marjorie's thoughts flew back to the time when she was in Florence's place: a freshman eager to make good among the upper classmen. But then it was a question of popularity and personal favoritism; now everything was different.

"It all depends upon yourself, Florence," she said. "You can become a Girl Scout if you will work hard enough. You must receive a mark of over eighty per cent on your first report, and you must make the hockey squad. Then you'll be among the first to join."

"Yes, I know. But isn't it dreadfully hard to get on the hockey team? With so many upper classmen, I mean?"

By this time Mildred Cavin, Daisy Gravers, and Esther Taylor—three more freshmen—had joined them. Evelyn Hopkins, Ruth Henry's room-mate, who had missed making both the sorority and the Scout troop the previous year, sauntered up, just as Florence asked the question.

"It's an impossibility!" she exclaimed, pettishly. "At least, if you're not in right with Miss Phillips, the Gym teacher who is Captain of the troop, you don't stand one bit of show!"

Marjorie colored at the words and the tone of this statement; she so much desired that her classmates appear dignified and well-poised to the freshmen.

Esther Taylor, a stylish girl with a flippant manner, laughed derisively. "Scouts don't mean much in my young life," she said, defiantly. "I'm no soldier-girl!"

Marjorie did not feel ready to go into the explanation of what Girl Scouts really stand for; she

merely arched her brows and looked away indifferently. To her relief, the orchestra struck up a one-step, and the girls all separated to dance.

Games and dancing followed alternately, until the groups were entirely broken up, and everyone was acquainted. It was half-past nine when an intermission was called for refreshments to be served.

The sophomores disappeared into a screened corner to procure the ice-cream for their guests, and while they were waiting for plates, Marjorie again encountered Ruth.

"It's my opinion," remarked the latter, "that we've struck a bunch of lemons! I haven't met a single girl so far that has pep enough to organize a secret class meeting, or put up any kind of a fight against us sophomores! Why, I don't believe there will be one girl in the whole freshman class who'll make the Girl Scout troop!"

"I'd be willing to bet a box of the best chocolates made that Edith Evans' sister makes it!" retorted Marjorie. "She's just the type!"

"I guess you're right," admitted Ruth; "but if you'd ever talk to that funny little thing over near the piano, you'd be disgusted with freshmen, too. She sort of keeps her mouth open, as if she weren't quite all there, and makes the queerest replies—or else none at all. But she's the most hopeless one I've struck yet."



"Who is she?" asked Marjorie, peeping around the screen and looking towards the orchestra. "That little girl in pink?"

"Yes—with the scared look."

"What's her name?"

"Alice Endicott," answered Ruth. Then, "But why all this interest, Marj?"

"No special reason, except that I'm sorry for anybody that is lonely. I think I'll try to make friends with her."

"You always did enjoy the 'Big Sister' act, didn't you?" jeered Ruth. A sarcastic little gleam came into her eyes. "How about Frieda Hammer?" she asked, pointedly. "She didn't turn up, did she?"

Ruth referred to the country girl whose father had worked on the farm where the Scout camp was situated the previous summer. The girl had come to the kitchen tent three separate times, at night, and upon each occasion had stolen a great deal of food. Upon the final occurrence she had been detected and identified, but although she had admitted the theft to Miss Phillips when she was later accused, she made no attempt at apology or explanation. The girl's ignorance, her wildness, her lack of advantages, had touched the pity of Marjorie and Frances, and some of the other softer-hearted Scouts; accordingly, the troop had voted to send Frieda to public school in the fall, assuming her support as

their public Good Turn. Marjorie had been tremendously enthusiastic over the project, while Ruth, on the other hand, had thrown cold water upon it from the beginning. Now that the girl had not appeared as she had promised, Ruth felt elated; Marjorie, in her turn, was equally cast down.

"She may come yet!" she answered, defiantly, putting more hope into her tone than she really entertained. "Mrs. Brubaker wrote to Miss Phillips that Frieda's baby sister was sick! So probably she'll come in a week or so."

Marjorie succeeded in obtaining two plates of ice-cream and some cakes, and, holding them high above the heads of the crowd, made her way to the distant corner indicated by Ruth. She found the freshman still sitting alone, half hidden by an overhanging evergreen, gazing dejectedly into space.

"Pardon me," said Marjorie pleasantly, "may I give you some ice-cream?"

The girl looked up suddenly, and for an instant her brown eyes met Marjorie's. She seemed pale and thin, and her eyes appeared unusually large and liquid, as if tears were never far from the surface.

"Thank you," she muttered, rising and taking the plate.

"And may I sit with you?" continued the older girl. "At least, if you are not expecting——"

"No, no; nobody is with me!" She flushed pain-

fully at the reference to her own unpopularity.

"Ruth Henry said she was just talking to you," said Marjorie hastily, trying to cover her embarrassment. "And your name is Alice Endicott, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"And who is your room-mate?" pursued Marjorie, wondering why the girl, whoever she was, should desert Alice, knowing how shy she was.

"Esther Taylor," replied the freshman; "but she doesn't bother much with me."

It was obvious that poor little Alice was both homesick and lonely, and Marjorie's heart warmed toward her as it might to a lost child. She chatted pleasantly all through the intermission; then, securing her a partner for the next dance, she left with the promise to seek her again.

When the party was all over, and the tired sophomores were getting ready for bed, Marjorie, who still felt the sting of Ruth's taunt, remarked to Lily,

"Well, if we can't do our Good Turn for Frieda Hammer, we can do one right here for the new girls, to keep them from being homesick. I, for one, intend to try."

"I'm with you," agreed Lily, as she crawled into bed.

But Ruth Henry's last waking thoughts were of a different nature: how she might best succeed in gaining the class presidency for herself.

“If I go at the thing boldly,” she decided, “there is no reason why I should fail. And I mean to do it, if I never accomplish another thing as long as I’m at Miss Allen’s!”

## CHAPTER II

## THE SOPHOMORE PRESIDENT

"ARE you going to dress for Ruth's tea?" asked Doris Sands of Marjorie Wilkinson, as the girls walked out of the dining-room together.

Marjorie pulled down the corners of her mouth at the question. It did seem strange to her that Ruth Henry should have decided in such a hurry to give a tea. There must be something behind it! Probably the girl was making a play for popularity, so that she might be elected to an office.

"I'm not going. It's just at the time of hockey practice, and, of course, I couldn't miss that. Lily won't be there, either."

"I'm sorry!" murmured Doris. "Things never seem half so nice without you, Marj!"

Marjorie smiled gratefully; Doris Sands not only said pleasant things, but one knew that she meant them. It was too bad that the class constitution prohibited a girl's re-election as president. The sophomore class could never find anyone else so tactful, so universally popular as Doris, Marjorie thought.

"Thanks, Doris," she said. "But I don't see why Ruth couldn't give us more notice, so that we might have arranged things to go. She never said a word about it at the reception!"

"Ruth always does things on the spur of the moment, and for queer reasons," sighed Doris, for the intricacies of the workings of Ruth's mind were too complicated for her simple, straightforward nature to comprehend. She and Ruth were exceptionally good friends; but then Doris Sands was the sort of girl who could get along with anybody. She never thought of Ruth as self-seeking; she merely attributed the measure of success she obtained to cleverness. She always looked for the best in everybody.

When Marjorie and Ruth had entered the seminary the previous fall, there had been thirty-five girls in the class. Now the membership had decreased to twenty-five, and they were all on rather intimate terms. Five of these were Girl Scouts: Anna Cane, Doris Sands, Lily Andrews, Ruth and Marjorie. These were the envied few, the inner circle, the leaders of the class. From their number everyone except, perhaps, Evelyn Hopkins, who always coveted good things for herself, expected the class president to be chosen.

Ruth had invited all twenty-five girls to her tea, although she and her room-mate, Evelyn Hopkins, scarcely hoped to be able to pack that number into

their room. However, all did not accept the invitation; only fifteen or sixteen finally appeared.

Doris and Evelyn were passing sandwiches and cakes, while Ruth poured the cocoa. The conversation, which buzzed from groups in all parts of the room, was suddenly silenced by the hostess's general remark,

"Girls," she said, still standing beside the wicker tea-table in the corner, "I guess you wondered why I was in such a hurry to entertain you, but the fact is, I thought it would be nice to have a little informal discussion about class matters before the meeting to-night. Because we don't want to conduct our affairs just any old way, hit or miss; we want to make ours the best class ever!"

"Hurray!" cheered Doris; "you've surely got the right spirit, Ruth."

Encouraged by the applause of the president, Ruth continued,

"We want a good strong organization, to keep those freshies from getting their secret meeting, and electing a class president; we want an efficient president ourselves—not that we can ever get one as good as our last year's"—she smiled admiringly at Doris—"who will systematize the whole thing! What do you all think?"

"Good for you, Ruth!" cried Barbara Hill, a quiet little girl who had always admired Ruth's courage.

"We want somebody that will put heart and soul into the job!"

"I don't think we ought to discuss each other now," explained Ruth; "that would be too embarrassing. But I just want everybody to think, and think hard, and not vote for a girl just because she's popular."

"I think Marj Wilkinson would be dandy!" remarked Anna Cane;—"by the way, she isn't here this afternoon, is she? I wonder why?"

Ruth felt a cold shiver pass over her; no matter how hard she tried to evade her, her old rival seemed to confront her upon every occasion. She had really planned the tea for a time when she knew Marjorie could not come, so that she might put her out of her class-mates' minds; but here she seemed to appear in the spirit, as if to mock her! Was this fate—for the way she had treated Marjorie the previous year—or was it merely her own conscience that caused her to dread the mention of the other girl's name for honors that she coveted for herself?

She reached over and put a lump of sugar into her cup of cocoa before she trusted herself to reply. When she spoke again, her voice was perfectly natural.

"Marj would certainly be great as president," she said sweetly; "except for one thing—and that's the very thing that's keeping her away this afternoon—she's more interested in athletics and Scout activi-



ties—in fact, anything where Miss Phillips is concerned”—she paused for a second to allow the girls who were not Scouts time to think it over—“more interested than she is in class affairs! I begged and begged her to give up hockey this afternoon, but she wouldn’t! And I think our president, whoever she is, especially at this important time, should give all the interest possible to the class.”

“That’s right, Ruth,” agreed Evelyn, who had really been coached upon what to say in the case of such a situation arising. “And another thing—why don’t we save Marj for senior president? She’d make a perfectly wonderful one then!”

“Yes, that’s a good idea,” commented Doris; and here the conversation lost its general tone. But Ruth felt satisfied; the purpose of her tea had not been in vain. She had sown the seed of opposition to Marjorie, and even if she herself were not elected to the office, she would have the satisfaction of knowing that she had kept Marjorie from it. And senior year was a long way off; perhaps Marjorie might lose her popularity by then. At any rate, she felt assured that the present danger was avoided.

It was only quarter of eight when she and Evelyn made their way to the English class-room, where Doris had scheduled the class meeting. The president and one or two others were already there. But Ruth had no intention of discussing the matter again; indeed, her idea in coming early was to ward

off any attempt to change the sentiment she had started at her tea.

By eight o'clock, nearly twenty girls had arrived, and Doris called the meeting to order.

"I don't see why people can't be interested enough to come on time!" remarked Ruth, significantly. The observation seemed general, but as Marjorie Wilkinson and Lily Andrews entered the room a few minutes later, when the roll was being called, the girls remembered the remark, and the shaft went home.

"I certainly want to congratulate the reception committee," said Doris at the beginning of the meeting,—“and particularly Marjorie Wilkinson as chairman. I'm sure we couldn't have given the freshmen a lovelier party!”

Marjorie blushed modestly at the praise, and Ruth smiled artificially. No one must think she minded Marjorie's success.

"Madame President!" said Marjorie, rising, "would it be in order to make a suggestion along the same line?"

"Certainly," nodded Doris.

"Well," she explained, "I noticed at the party—and later—that a number of our freshmen were pretty homesick. Now wouldn't it be possible for each girl in our class to sort of 'adopt' a particular girl, to look out for her, and try to make her happy? I know that the Y.W.C.A. has instituted that cus-

tom in several of the colleges, and it works splendidly."

"I think that is a charming idea, Marjorie," said Doris. "What do the rest of the class think?"

Ruth instantly thought of all sorts of objections, but hesitated to be the first to voice them, lest her opposition might seem too pointed. She winked slyly at Evelyn; she could depend upon her to rally to her cause.

"Madame President," said Evelyn, interpreting Ruth's silent request, "would there be enough of us? Aren't there forty freshmen?"

"I thought of that," answered Marjorie; "but I am sure the juniors would help."

"Juniors!" exclaimed Barbara Hill, scornfully. "We wouldn't want a rival class to come to our assistance, would we?"

"Seniors, then," replied Marjorie, with annoyance in her tone. She was interested in the idea itself, not in the details of its execution.

"I think Marjorie's plan is wonderful," put in Ruth, deciding at this point that she could remain out of the discussion no longer, "but I have one suggestion to make. You know yourselves that girls of our age don't like to be pitied and petted! Let's do something, certainly, just as Marjorie proposes, to make the freshmen feel at home, but I would advise that we do everything in our power to give them a good, lively interest—that instead of

treating them like the Infant Department of a Sunday School, we take away their loneliness by some good stiff rivalry! Let's call them together, and tell them more about their secret class meeting, and challenge them to try to outwit us! They'll be so busy, and they'll develop so much real class spirit that they won't have time to get blue."

"I think that's great!" cried Evelyn, jumping up impulsively. "Let's get the thing started right away."

"Perhaps we had better have our class elections first," said Doris, glancing at her watch. "Then we can continue with the discussion afterwards, till nine o'clock, for I promised Miss Allen I'd close promptly. Nominations are now in order!"

"I nominate Ruth Henry!" said Barbara Hill, still glowing with admiration of the girl.

"I nominate Lily Andrews!" announced Marjorie, to the surprise of everyone.

"I nominate Evelyn Hopkins!" declared Ruth, glorying in the fact that her loyalty to her roommate would be silently applauded.

"And I move that the nominations be closed!" chimed in Barbara, again.

The whole thing had been done so quickly that Marjorie's especial friends hardly realized that her chances for class presidency had vanished completely. Marjorie herself did not mind: her attention was so taken up with hockey and freshmen and

Scout activities, that she had scarcely given the matter a thought. Nor did Lily, stunned as she was at the proposal of her own name for the office, realize her room-mate's exclusion. But Ruth was so exultant that she could hardly refrain from crying out in her joy. It seemed to her that her dearest wish was about to come true. Two easier opponents, she thought, could not possibly have been selected: Lily Andrews would never be elected—she was too fat and plain; and Evelyn Hopkins—light, frivolous, self-centered girl that she was—was decidedly unpopular. The outcome of the business seemed assured in Ruth's favor; she was so certain of her own election, that she did not even bother to vote for herself, but instead cast her ballot for Evelyn.

Clerks and a judge of the election were appointed, and the voting was quickly concluded. While they withdrew to count the ballots, the others proceeded to discuss a time at which to call the freshmen class together, to emphasize the importance of securing their own meeting. Wednesday afternoon was finally decided upon.

The judge of elections returned, and stood beside Doris. Ruth looked at the girl closely, vainly attempting to ascertain from her expression the outcome of the election; but the latter returned her only an impersonal stare.

"There was a tie," she announced, "between Lily Andrews and Ruth Henry, each candidate having

received nine votes. We shall need to have another ballot between these two."

Ruth almost gasped at the announcement; quick figuring allowed her to conclude that Evelyn must have received seven votes! Undoubtedly the girl had voted for herself, and, of course, Ruth had cast hers in her favor—but where had she obtained the other five? Ruth forgot to reckon on the fact that a number of girls outside of the Scout troop were more or less jealous of their successful rivals, and would vote for Evelyn simply because she was not a Girl Scout.

"I'll fix that," thought Ruth; "I'll just vote for myself this time!"

Ruth smiled confidently as the judge again returned with her decision, she was so sure of victory. Now she was glad she had not made the office before; it would be so much more honor to be sophomore president!

"I have the honor to declare that our next president will be Lily Andrews!" announced the girl briefly, and resumed her seat.

And, amid shouts and applause, the meeting broke up, for the hour of nine had struck.

Ruth Henry was defeated again, but not wholly so; for Marjorie's plan for befriending homesick freshmen had been put aside, and her chance of becoming president lost. But—her rival's candidate had won!

## CHAPTER III

## MARJORIE'S FRESHMAN

IF Marjorie was disappointed at the failure of her plan, she was tremendously elated over her roommate's election to the class presidency. Lily Andrews was not a girl who was naturally popular like Doris Sands, or Marjorie herself. She had fought valiantly for everything she had achieved, and her triumph, therefore, was all the more precious.

For an instant, while the vote was being taken, Ruth had thought of the Lily Andrews that had first appeared at Miss Allen's—extravagantly overdressed, noticeably fat, and crude in every respect. She had smiled confidently at the picture, scorning the idea that such a girl could ever stand a chance against her.

But Ruth had not counted on the fairness of the girls at Miss Allen's: they thought of their new president, not as she had been, but as she was now; and because Lily had put aside her extravagant taste, had resolutely trained herself down by self-denial, and had even done creditably in athletics, she

was greatly admired. Besides this, Lily Andrews was genuine—and so loyal! Moreover, all the girls, even those who were not Scouts and therefore knew nothing about Ruth's disgraceful trick against Marjorie the previous year, often had cause to doubt the former's sincerity.

Lily herself was too much overcome with surprise to realize it all at once. She walked out of the room with Marjorie's arm around her, still under the impression that she must be dreaming.

When they reached their own room Lily sank down into a chair, exhausted from the excitement.

"Marj, what ever made you nominate me?" she cried. "I'm not the stuff presidents are made of—like you and Doris!"

"Oh, but you are—or you wouldn't have gotten it!"

"I got it because they didn't put anybody good against me! I had meant to nominate you; but before I had a chance, Barbara moved that the nominations be closed. But you led me into it—now you must tell me what to do!"

She looked at her room-mate imploringly, as if she were already bowed down with the sense of responsibility.

"I'm sorry, Lil, but I can't tell you," laughed Marjorie. "You know I've never been president."

"That's true! Oh, say, Marj, wasn't Ruth the



surprised girl when she heard I got it? I couldn't help watching her face, and I nearly died!"

Marjorie, too, had enjoyed the situation immensely; for while she usually disliked seeing anyone disappointed, Ruth had been so over-confident, and so scornful of Lily the preceding year, that she could not help being glad of the outcome. Then, a sudden thought struck her.

"You asked me what I'd do, Lil," she said. "I'd advise you to enlist Ruth's help!"

"Ruth Henry?" This in consternation.

"Yes; for this reason: she has had a big disappointment in not being elected herself, and I know Ruth well enough to realize that when she is disappointed, she often gets spiteful. So, if you take my advice, you will make her your friend before she has a chance to become your enemy!"

Lily weighed carefully the suggestion put forth by her room-mate. She nodded her head slightly in her approval of the plan.

"I guess you're right," she said. "I had, of course, thought of consulting Doris, and I suppose I might as well include Ruth. It can't do any harm."

The next day was one of those beautiful mild days that would seem to belong rather to summer than to autumn. The windows all over the school were wide open; the sound of lawn-mowers could be heard in the distance; the drowsy warmth of the

air made the girls think of Commencement time.

Resolutely putting aside her desire to be lazy, and oppressed by the thought of her official duties, Lily Andrews decided to devote the afternoon to a consultation with Doris Sands, the out-going president.

But Marjorie shared no such cares. Freed from hockey practice, and planning to study her lessons in the evening, her thoughts flew to her canoe—that beautiful prize she had won at the summer camp. What could possibly be more delightful than an afternoon spent in paddling and drifting about the lake, with her copy of Alfred Noyes' poems to glance into now and then? The idea was so alluring that she could hardly force herself to sit through luncheon.

As a rule Marjorie Wilkinson was a sociable being—she enjoyed other girls' companionship, and possessed an unusual quality of friendliness. But to-day she felt dreamy; she longed to get away from everybody, where conversation would be unnecessary, and where she could give herself up to her own drowsy imaginings. For she had many happy things to think about. That very morning she had received a letter—nothing thrilling in it, but just an interesting, boyish account of activities at Princeton—whose signature had made her heart beat more rapidly. For it was from John Hadley, the boy whom she had liked and admired most of all the Boy Scouts the

previous year. The very fact that he should still think of her amidst all the rush of his busy college life flattered her, and set her to dreaming.

So she found her book and started for the lake, only to remember, when she had gone half of the distance, that she had left her paddle in the closet.

"I believe I'll leave it in the canoe after this," she decided; "nobody would ever think of taking the canoe, and it would be so much less trouble. And I'd probably go out oftener if I didn't have to come up here for the paddle every time."

She hurried across the sun-lit campus, through the trees, to the little lake. There under a weeping-willow, lay the canoe.

A thrill of delight passed over her as she turned the canoe right side up; the possession of such a beautiful object had never lost its charm. She wondered whether she was selfish in enjoying it alone, but dismissed the idea when she recalled the fact that Lily and Doris and Ruth would all be occupied with their own affairs.

The picturesque scene—only a tiny lake in comparison with the one at camp—and the smooth, gliding motion of the canoe were in perfect harmony with the girl's mood and the quiet, peaceful day. She began to hum softly to the rhythmic dip, dip of the paddle into the still water.

"If John Hadley were only at Episcopal Academy now," she mused, "maybe we could sneak some good

times!" Then she fell to dreaming that he suddenly appeared on the edge of the lake, and that they spent the afternoon together. But when the thought recalled to her mind the consequences of that other stolen meeting, at camp, she actually laughed aloud.

Her laughter evidently startled some one on the bank, for there immediately followed a gasp, and then a suppressed sob. Marjorie stopped paddling.

"Who's there?" she called, softly. "Can I do anything to help——"

A very mussed, woe-begone figure emerged from behind a clump of rhododendrons. Her hair streamed in her eyes, her summer dress bore evidence of a careless position, and her tear-stained cheeks of weeping. It was Alice Endicott, the little freshman whom Ruth had made such fun of at the sophomore reception. And she was evidently in the deepest distress.

"Alice!" exclaimed Marjorie, in surprise. "Why, what is the matter?"

"Nothing!" sobbed the girl forlornly. Then, "Everything!"

Both remarks, so entirely opposite, were no doubt correct. Nothing really was the matter, and yet everything was wrong; for Alice Endicott was hopelessly homesick.

Marjorie ran the nose of her canoe aground upon the low bank and begged Alice to get in. Hardly knowing what she was about, the younger girl

climbed into the bow and sank down facing Marjorie.

"Now tell me all about it," said Marjorie, in the most sympathetic tone imaginable. She thought of her own first days at the school, when Ruth, obviously so popular, had totally neglected her, and when her own roommate, Lily Andrews, had seemed impossible. Remorseful, too, because of her own selfish happiness, she felt more eager than ever to comfort the lonely freshman. But it was a difficult matter, she knew.

"I want to go home," sobbed Alice, with her handkerchief at her eyes.

"No, no!" protested Marjorie. "Please give us another chance. Don't you like it a bit here?"

"I hate it!" exclaimed the other, with more emphasis than Marjorie thought her capable of. "You're the only girl who's been even half decent to me."

"And I'm ashamed of myself," muttered Marjorie sadly. "But please forgive us all, Alice; we didn't realize how you felt. Won't you, please—and wait a day or two while you decide whether you want to stay or not?"

Alice stopped crying; she was really surprised at Marjorie's sincerity in assuming the blame herself. Still, she pursued her same line of argument.

"There's nothing here that I can't get in school near home."

Marjorie was silent; was this accusation true? Was Miss Allen's really nicer than any other school, or was it merely her own opinion? She met the question fairly, searching her mind truthfully for an answer. At last she found one: in the eyes of even unprejudiced observers, it must appear to excel all other schools—*because of its Girl Scout troop!*

And so she replied to Alice's challenge with a description of the troop, and of the big organization of which it was a part, telling of its principles and its aims; relating stories of the hikes, the parties, the good times with the Boy Scouts, and—best of all—of the wonderful camping trip during the vacation. She told her about the contest, that the very canoe in which they were sitting was a reward from the Girl Scouts.

"So you see," concluded Marjorie, "you can have a great big aim here, and you can begin right now to do such good work that you'll be a Scout as soon as the first report comes out!"

"But——" said Alice slowly, dipping her hand idly into the water—"but suppose I don't make it!"

Marjorie drew a quick breath. Suppose she did not! Suppose, like herself, she should lose out! Then, in a flash, Marjorie became aware of a great truth: the value of human suffering. Up to this time, she could never quite see any good in her former disappointment; now she realized that it made her akin to all the others in the world who had suf-

ferred, and would suffer again. She could understand, and she could comfort Alice from the depths of her own experience, just as Miss Phillips had comforted her.

"And if you missed out, you would try again!" she said, proceeding to recount the story of her own failure, being careful, however, to leave Ruth's part out of the narrative.

As the sun sank lower, the girls talked on, until Marjorie noticed that it was time to dress for dinner. Alice seemed quite happy now, and even smiled at the dirty smudges on her nose which she saw reflected in the tiny mirror on the bottom of Marjorie's powder puff.

"I guess I was pretty silly," she admitted, as the girls strolled across the campus together. "But my room-mate, Esther Taylor, never pays the slightest attention to me, and I was pretty lonely. But I won't be again." She smiled shyly up into Marjorie's face. "For I know now that I have a friend."

"Indeed you have," assured the older girl, pressing her hand. "And you have a big aim before you. I shall be terribly disappointed, Alice, if you don't make the Girl Scout troop!"

"I *will* make it!" she replied resolutely; and Marjorie believed her.

"Promise to come to see me every day," urged Marjorie, as Alice turned to leave her at the door of her room.

"I'd love to! But you'll get tired of me, I'm afraid."

"No, I won't! And remember—*you're my freshman!*"

"And it all goes to prove," she thought as she closed the door of her room, "that Ruth may block my plans, but she can't influence the real me! And I've really won, after all!"



## CHAPTER IV

## THE FIRST SCOUT MEETING

IF THE members of Pansy troop could have consulted their own wishes, they would have held a Scout meeting as soon as all the girls had arrived at school. But Miss Phillips had declared that such a thing was impossible; there were too many other matters to attend to.

School had opened on Thursday, and the first real event outside of the regular program had been the sophomore reception. It was not until over a week afterward, on Friday evening, that the Girl Scouts met for the first time.

The meeting was scheduled for seven-thirty, but by a quarter after the hour, everyone of the fifteen girls had arrived.

Every Scout wore her uniform; as each one entered the little room which had been set aside by Miss Allen for the troop, she saluted the Captain, who sat at a desk in the front. It seemed like old times; only the two seniors, who had been graduated, were

missing. The present members could not help thinking of them.

"Too bad we can't stay at Miss Allen's forever," remarked Marjorie; "it seems awful to think we had to lose two Scouts."

"But we'll get more," observed Ruth, optimistically, who had never been a girl of deep friendships.

"And next year Edith and Helen will be gone," continued Marjorie—"and the others."

For an instant she came face to face with the great fact that has staggered the individual since the beginning of civilization—the realization of the ceaseless passage of time. Marjorie reflected, with a certain sense of sadness, that she too must graduate, and leave the school and the Scout troop to younger girls. The thought sobered her; it was with an effort that she turned her attention to the Captain, as she called the Scouts to order.

"We shall begin a trifle early," explained Miss Phillips, "since everybody is here, for there is a great deal to talk about. Now—Troop, *Attention!*"

The usual opening ceremony was performed, together with the recitation of the Scout laws and pledge. It was so familiar to them all that they hardly thought of the words as they repeated them; to Marjorie, however, they were impressive, for she had not been a member of the troop so long as the other girls.

The treasurer made her statement, and the dues

were collected. As there were no committees to report, the Captain proceeded immediately to "old business."

"I suppose you are all eager to hear about our troop's Good Turn," she began, "and I am very glad to be able to tell you something favorable. But first, for the benefit of the girls who were not at camp, let me explain that the troop met and decided to send a poor, ignorant, badly brought-up country girl to public school in this town, and to pay her board and buy her clothing all year. Her name is Frieda Hammer. And, as you all know, although her mother promised to send her the day before school opened, she did not arrive. I have since learned that she kept her at home because the baby was sick, but intends to send her this Saturday."

Marjorie's eyes shone. Their plan was to succeed after all! Ruth had been mistaken; when Frieda began to develop and make progress, perhaps Ruth would be sorry for the distrustful attitude she had taken! And think what it would mean to Frieda—a girl of her own age! Now she would have pretty clothes that the Scouts would buy her, live in a lovely home in the village, where the Scouts would pay her board, and go to the public school. She would meet nice girls, develop friendships, and have the opportunity to study and prepare herself to make something worth while of her life. She would be just

like Cinderella—and the Scouts would be the fairy godmother!

“But *where* shall we get the money, Captain?” demanded Ruth. She made no attempt to conceal her disapproval of the project; she would have preferred to direct the troop’s attention to earning money for the following summer’s outing.

“That is what we must talk about this evening,” replied Miss Phillips. “But in the meantime, we have twenty-six dollars in the treasury. Mrs. Johnson, in the village, tells me she will board Frieda for the special rate of six dollars a week—she’s interested in her, too, and would like to help us—so what would you all say to paying twelve dollars in advance for board, and spending the other fourteen on some clothing?”

“Great! Splendid!” cried the girls.

“But how about our Hallowe’en party!” pouted Ruth. “Aren’t we going to have any more good times ourselves?” Then, noticing the spirit of antagonism that her remark had aroused, she hastened to add, “I wouldn’t mind if I thought Frieda would appreciate it. But I’ll bet she won’t! She’ll steal again, just like she did at camp!”

Miss Phillips held up her hand to caution Ruth not to go any farther; and Frances Wright, who, next to Marjorie, had been most interested in the girl from the start, protested vehemently.

"Ruth!" she cried, disdainfully, "you surely don't think that!"

"Yes, she does!" exclaimed Marjorie impulsively. "She doesn't trust——"

"Girls!" remonstrated the Captain, rising from the chair to take command of the situation. "We will have no more discussion about the matter. We shall simply vote on the motion—if someone will be kind enough to make one—to spend the twenty-six dollars that we have in the treasury on board and clothing for Frieda Hammer."

The motion was made and carried by an overwhelming majority, and Miss Phillips asked Frances Wright to accompany her to the city the following Saturday to meet the girl when she should arrive.

"Now we must discuss other ways to raise money," continued the Captain. "Several of the girls have suggested a Christmas bazaar. This I consider a splendid plan, so if you are all in favor of it, we shall start in making things for it immediately. But, of course, we cannot hold that until December, and we shall need money before then. So has anyone else a proposal?"

The resourceful Marjorie arose to her feet. After giving the customary salute, she began:

"The other day, when I was out in my canoe on the lake, it occurred to me how lovely it must be there at night. I kept wishing we could have some sort of party on the water, and then the idea came

to me to have a sort of Japanese fête, and charge admission. We could hire Japanese lanterns, and put up two or three attractive booths to sell refreshments, and I could sell rides in my canoe—maybe we could hire two or three extra boats for the occasion—and maybe tell fortunes, or something like that. Do you suppose," she concluded, "that we could get Miss Allen's permission?"

Miss Phillips did not need to ask for an expression of opinion; she could read from the Scouts' faces their approval of the plan. As a mere matter of form, she called for a vote upon the question, and when the suggestion was unanimously adopted, a date was selected, and Marjorie herself appointed chairman of the committee.

"And now," said the Captain, "I have a lovely invitation for you!"

"The Boy Scouts?" cried Ruth, joyfully.

"Not this time, Ruth. No—it's from Miss Martin's school. They want us to visit them, I think to give a Scout demonstration. And then, I believe, they intend to start a rival troop."

"I would love to see some other Girl Scouts," said Edith Evans. "Won't it be great to have a sister troop!"

"Yes, indeed," agreed the Captain. "But I am not willing to take fifteen Scouts—not even two patrols, you know—over there to demonstrate. I asked Miss Watson, the gym teacher at Miss Martin's, to

postpone the invitation until after the first of November, when our reports come out and the hockey team is chosen. That will give us an opportunity to fill up our troop; indeed, I hope we have at least three, and maybe four full patrols!"

"Do you really expect so many freshmen to meet the requirements, Captain?" asked Frances.

"No, not only freshmen. I think some more upper classmen will qualify—girls like Mae Van Horn, for instance, who just fell a trifle short last year."

"Would it be possible, Captain," suggested Marjorie, shyly, "to make Frieda a Girl Scout? Couldn't she be an honorary member, or something?"

But Miss Phillips wisely shook her head.

"No; in one respect, Ruth was right—we must not expect a lot from her at first. Frieda Hammer is a girl who has never been taught right from wrong, and we must go very slowly. If she proves worthy, perhaps we can take her in later, although I would prefer to let her wait till she passes our school examinations, and has a chance to enter just like any other girl. We all appreciate things we have to work hard for, you know!"

"We certainly do!" agreed Marjorie, emphatically; and Ruth, sensitive to the reference, could not control the flush that spread over her face.

"And now for Scouting itself," concluded the Captain; "for we must not neglect that. We shall probably go for a hike Saturday a week, if it is clear,

and then we are going to study definitely for our first-class test. I made a big mistake when I thought you could pass it in two weeks' time at camp. But then I was going by the old hand-book, and in the new one it is much more difficult; the signalling alone will probably require two months' study. I am going to ask Mr. Remington, the Boy Scoutmaster, to give the final test in the semaphore and Morse code, and every other requirement must be passed with the same thoroughness. If my dream comes true, the first class Scouts of Pansy troop will be able to go anywhere—even to National Headquarters—and pass the stiffest examination the Director herself could give, bringing credit to Pansy troop!"

"Whew!" exclaimed Ruth. "I sort of miscalculated at camp, didn't I?"

The girls laughed at the recollection of the episode of kidnapping Frieda's sister.

"Frieda will never forgive me for that," she added; "I guess I can never hope to become her friend!"

"I guess you don't care much!" remarked Ethel, with a touch of sarcasm in her tone.

"Well, I don't believe it's going to do any good!" she flashed back. "You mark my words—Frieda Hammer can't be trusted!"

"Girls!" expostulated Miss Phillips again. "Come to order! We shall now review our semaphore alphabet. Line up! Troop, *attention!* Right *dress!*"



When the meeting was over, Marjorie and Lily sauntered slowly back to their room.

"I was so happy about Frieda," said Marjorie, a shade of discouragement creeping into her voice, "till Ruth threw such cold water on the project. Do you believe it will work out all right, Lil?"

"I believe *everything* will work out all right," replied the other girl optimistically. "After you won the canoe, and I was elected class president against Ruth, I feel as if nothing we ever really want will fall through. So please don't worry, Marj!"

And Marjorie decided that she would adopt Lily's cheerful view of the situation—and wait. In a little over a week, Frieda would arrive; from the very beginning Marjorie would adopt so friendly an attitude that it would be impossible for the girl to treat her indifferently.

"For kindness always wins in the end," she thought, as she turned out the pretty boudoir lamp beside her bed.

## CHAPTER V

## CHECK-MATED

EVER since Lily Andrews had taken up her duties as sophomore president she found a noticeable change in the attitude of certain members of the class towards her. Foremost among this group were Ruth Henry and Evelyn Hopkins, who boasted proudly among the other girls of their friendship with the president. If Ruth harbored any resentment against her successful rival, she carefully concealed it; and most of her classmates spoke of her as Lily Andrews' "right-hand man."

Without a doubt, Ruth was a great help to the new officer. Marjorie, always more interested in athletics and Scout affairs, paid only a half-hearted attention to Lily's official problems; and Doris Sands was really tired out and needed a rest. So, in sheer desperation, Lily sought Ruth, and always found her interested and helpful.

One afternoon when Marjorie was out walking with Alice Endicott, Lily, with notebook and pencil in hand, hurried over to Ruth's room. She found her

sitting languidly beside her wicker tea-table, playing with the tea-ball, and carrying on a disconcerted conversation with Evelyn.

"How many times do I have to tell you not to knock, Lily Andrews!" she exclaimed. "I thought you knew us well enough by this time——"

Lily laughed, nevertheless highly flattered. It is always more or less of a triumph to conquer a dislike, and Lily felt genuinely pleased at the change in Ruth's attitude toward her.

"You're awfully good——" she began.

"Not at all!" protested Ruth. "But Evelyn and I are always at home to our friends!" Then, noticing the notebook, "What's the important business now, Lil?"

"Oh, it's class stuff again! I want your advice, Ruth."

"It's yours for the asking!" replied the hostess, magnanimously, well pleased to be so obviously within the "inner circle."

"You really ought to be class president, Ruth. You do more work than I do, and don't get the credit."

"I don't want credit," lied Ruth; "all I want is our class's good."

"Yes, I know. Well, here is my present trouble. You know, every single class since the foundation of the school has succeeded in holding their meeting in spite of the sophomores' attempt at interference.

Why can't we break the spell? What could we possibly do?"

Ruth sat up straight in her chair and half closed her eyes, lost in contemplation.

"We *will* break the spell!" she announced, slowly. "I think I have a new idea!"

"Ruth, you are so clever!" exclaimed Evelyn, who could not keep out of the conversation. "I almost believe you can do it!"

"Tell us what your plan is!" begged Lily, impatient with even a moment's unnecessary delay.

"The private detective system—and by that I mean to have each girl in our class responsible for one or two freshmen, and know where they are every minute of the day. In that way, all of us would really be on guard all the time!"

"Wonderful!" cried Lily enthusiastically. "Would it really be possible to do it?"

"I don't see why not; the struggle lasts only six weeks—nearly two are gone already. And if everybody will work——"

"That's great, Ruth," interrupted Lily, deciding instantly to adopt the plan; "I'll post a notice for a meeting this very evening, and we'll put it up to the class. Then, if everybody approves of the scheme, I want you to be chairman of the Vigilance Committee—the leader, you know, to whom the girls would report any suspicions."

Ruth's heart gave a bound of delight: the appoint-

ment was just what she desired. With a little tact and diplomacy, she could make Lily a mere figure-head, and herself the power behind the throne; in this manner she could pave the way for her own election to the presidency for junior year.

But she did not dare to betray to Lily the fact that she was eager for the office. She even hesitated a moment before she accepted.

"Of course it will mean an awful lot of work, but if you really think I am capable, Lily, you know I'd do anything for the sake of the class."

"Of course you're capable," reassured the other, "and you must take it. It will remove a big weight from my mind, too, if you do."

The girls discussed the matter in detail, while Evelyn made tea. Then, refreshed and encouraged, Lily returned to her own room.

At the class meeting that evening, when Lily announced that Ruth Henry was chairman of the Vigilance Committee, the general wave of surprise that spread over the room was apparent. For most of the girls remembered how ungraciously the latter had treated her the previous year, before there was any talk of Lily's rising to prominence. But the act only served to enhance the admiration the girls felt for their president; they realized anew how magnanimous she was, and how much she valued the good of the class.

Ruth presented her plan so effectively that it was

immediately approved and adopted. Each girl was allowed to select her own freshman, for, as Ruth remarked, if the sophomores chose their particular friends there would be less cause for suspicion. She herself picked out two charges—Esther Taylor and Florence Evans—both girls of unusual energy. Marjorie Wilkinson naturally selected Alice Endicott. Each sophomore was equipped with a whistle which she was instructed to blow if necessary, unless she happened to be inside of the dormitory building. And since, according to Miss Allen's rules, it was forbidden to hold the meeting before the rising bell in the morning, or after the supper bell in the evening, the difficulty of the problem was reduced fifty per cent.

The freshmen, in the meantime, were striving to formulate some definite plan for concerted action. But with no officers to assume responsibility or give directions, and with no opportunity for general discussion, there seemed to be little hope of their getting together. However, as in all cases heretofore, they relied upon the resourcefulness and hesitance of the junior president.

The holder of that office was Ethel Todd, one of the very cleverest of the Girl Scouts. Exceptionally capable, she usually accomplished what she set out to do. When she learned that Ruth Henry was chairman of the Vigilance Committee she was more determined than ever to check-mate any plans the

other might make. Taking matters in her own hands, she arranged for a thorough consultation with Florence Evans and Mildred Cavin, whom she considered class leaders.

"Ruth Henry has some clever scheme," she informed them, "you can just depend on that. But I mean to beat her, no matter how perfect her system is," she added. She had never forgiven Ruth for the contemptible manner in which she had treated Marjorie the previous year, and she could not resist the temptation to do everything in her power to get even.

So she set about to discover the sophomore's plan, and to outwit the girls if she could. She watched Ruth's movements closely, and saw her follow Esther Taylor to the library the following afternoon, remain there as long as the freshman did, and come out again a few seconds afterward, dogging her footsteps to the hockey field. This same occurrence took place the day after; at the same time she perceived that Lily Andrews seemed always close on the trail of Mildred Cavin, and Marjorie of Alice Endicott. Ethel retired to her own room to think over this in quiet.

What could it all mean? Did Ruth and Lily and Marjorie think that the other freshmen could not hold a meeting without these few girls—that they, leaders though they were, were indispensable? She glanced out of the window and saw Daisy Gravers

walking down the path to the gate; a few steps behind her came Doris Sands, apparently unconcerned about things in general, but every now and then glancing at Daisy, and then looking hastily toward the dormitory. Then, in a flash, the system was disclosed to the junior President!

"PRIVATE DETECTIVE SYSTEM!" she exclaimed aloud, jumping suddenly to her feet. "Each freshman shadowed by a soph!"

She hit upon a brilliant, yet simple, plan. She would beat Ruth by *cleanliness!* Accordingly, she wrote forty notes to forty freshmen, telling them to wear kimonas, carry soap and towels, and be in the shower-bath compartment on the third floor at one minute after seven the following day. If the sophomores were up early enough to notice the freshmen's absences, they would not suspect anything unusual in such a proceeding.

The next morning was a dark one, and, much to her annoyance, Ruth overslept by ten minutes. Jumping up suddenly, she hastily put on her bathrobe, and, passing along the hall by way of Esther Taylor's and Florence Evans' rooms, made her way toward the shower. She did not hear any stir as she went by the freshmen's doors, but being late, she hurried on. A moment later, she reached the shower-bath compartment.

As she was just about to enter, the swinging door was abruptly flung open, and a noisy crowd of girls,



in kimonas and bath-robcs, almost knocked her over. They were freshmen, and they were all tremendously happy over something; in a flash, she read the news of their victory. She did not even need Mildred Cavin's announcement: "Florence Evans is freshman president!" to confirm her fears.

The hot blood rushed to Ruth's face as she caught sight of Ethel Todd's triumphantly gleaming eyes. Dejected, defeated, she disappeared into the shower to drown her disappointment in cold water.

For, in her own imagination, she saw the junior presidency fading from her grasp!

## CHAPTER VI

## THE ARRIVAL OF FRIEDA

MARJORIE and Lily were seated in the old-fashioned, comfortably furnished parlor in the home of Mrs. Johnson, that motherly woman who, through her interest in both the Girl Scouts and their ward, had promised to board Frieda for six dollars a week. The girls had come down to see her to venture a little plan of theirs, and Marjorie was relieved to find her so easy to become acquainted with. Mrs. Johnson was just the sort of person—placid, sympathetic, jolly—that any normal girl would love. This fact, thought Marjorie, ought to help them a great deal in their success with Frieda.

“You see,” explained Marjorie, idly running her finger along the surface of the horse-hair sofa on which she was seated, “we want to make Frieda enjoy herself from the very beginning. Some of the freshmen at Miss Allen’s were pretty homesick at first, and we want to avoid all that with her. For she really belongs to us, you know; we’re responsible for her!”

"Yes, yes," agreed Mrs. Johnson, still in doubt regarding the purpose of the girl's remarks. Was Marjorie afraid that she, Mrs. Johnson, would not treat her kindly?

"But what——?" she began.

"What I am trying to tell you about," laughed Marjorie, interrupting her, "is that, provided you are willing, we want to have a little surprise party here for her when she arrives. We thought we'd order cake and ice-cream, and have everybody hide somewhere in the house. Then, when Miss Phillips and Frances and Frieda come in, you suggest that she go to her room, and take off her things, and come down again.

"While she's upstairs, we'll come out of our hiding-places and play the piano, and sing her a welcome song. Ethel Todd, one of the Scouts, has written a dandy—a parody on 'Jingle Bells'!"

Mrs. Johnson beamed happily.

"Indeed, I do heartily approve of your plan, my dear," she said. "Now won't you and your friend"—she rose from her seat—"come up to see her room? I wish I could have put her on the second floor, but you know my father and mother live with me, and they demand the first consideration."

Mrs. Johnson led the way up two flights of stairs and into a little room with a gabled roof. The room itself, the curtains, the rag rug, the bed, and the old fashioned bureau, were very neat and clean, but the

whole effect of the furnishing was too bare to allow the room to be regarded as really attractive. Marjorie wondered what it would seem like to Frieda, unused as she was to luxury of any sort.

"It's awfully nice," she said with sincerity. "I'm sure Frieda will like it."

"I hope she does!" sighed Mrs. Johnson; "but you never can tell about young people these days."

When Saturday finally came, there was great excitement among the members of the Girl Scout troop. They felt like people who are about to adopt a child, so interested were they in the girl's welfare. Ruth alone was indifferent. She refused to believe that any good would come of the whole project. Some of the Scouts thought she harbored resentment against Frieda for disclosing her deceit in borrowing the baby at camp. Ethel Todd, always suspicious of Ruth, thought that she naturally was hostile toward any scheme in which Marjorie was deeply interested.

But Ruth's opposition in reality was caused by neither of these things; for once her reasons were impersonal. She really doubted Frieda's ability to appreciate what was being done for her, and though she could not exactly explain why, she felt positive that the girl would betray the troop's confidence, and make them wish that they had never considered the undertaking.

A dull, dreary rain on Saturday morning seemed

to presage failure for the girls' plans at the very start. It was always dismal, Marjorie thought, to go anywhere in the rain, but especially to a new town. Frieda would receive a bad impression of the place from the beginning, and, if she had any tendency toward homesickness, the inclemency of the weather would only help to intensify it.

"I certainly am glad we planned this party, Lil," she observed, as the girls were donning their Scout uniforms. "That will probably be the only bright spot in the day for Frieda."

"You forget," said Lily reprovingly, "that Frieda is to be met by our Captain!"

"That's right, Lil! She's lucky!"

She looked dreamily out of the window, not seeing the rain, but thinking of the first time Miss Phillips had talked with her. From the very start she had meant more to Marjorie than any of the sorority girls.

"And yet," she added wistfully, "Miss Phillips didn't seem able to make much impression upon either Frieda or her mother before. Oh, I do hope Ruth is mistaken!"

At half-past two, fourteen Girl Scouts, all in uniform, were concealed on the first floor of Mrs. Johnson's house. Two of the girls were in the cellar-way, three in the roomy kitchen, two under the dining-room table, four behind chairs and the sofa in the living-room, one underneath the sofa, and two

in the dining-room closet. While they tried not to become hilarious, for they expected their guests at any moment now, suppressed whispers and giggles were heard from time to time from all parts of the downstairs.

Mrs. Johnson, apparently the only person in the room, sat in a chair beside the table, knitting a white sweater for Frieda. Marjorie, sprawled at full length under the sofa, was making vain attempts to keep up a conversation with Lily and Ethel, who were behind it.

Suddenly a step was heard on the porch, and instantly a hush fell upon the room. The girls in the dining-room and kitchen became silent, too, as Mrs. Johnson answered the bell. But the Scouts' hearts fell as they distinguished the deep tones of a masculine voice.

"Michael Doyle, the plumber, told me to come here and look at the kitchen sink," they heard. "I'm his helper. Didn't you send for someone, Mrs. Johnson?"

"Why, to be sure!" replied their hostess genially, opening the door to admit the man. The girls remained in their hiding places, and only with great effort suppressed their desire to giggle. Mrs. Johnson led the way to the kitchen, where she explained the cause of the difficulty to the man.

In the meantime, more steps were heard outside; the hearts of the concealed girls beat all the more

wildly with excitement because of the false alarm they had just experienced.

It was evident, after a moment or two of silence, that Mrs. Johnson had not heard the bell. Probably she had gone down the cellar with the plumber. Marjorie was debating in her own mind whether she ought not to creep out of her hiding place and open the door, for the day was too disagreeable to keep anyone outside longer than necessary, when Miss Phillips tried the knob, and, finding that it turned, she opened the door and walked in. Frieda followed, and then Frances.

Frieda Hammer, a girl of fourteen or fifteen, was dressed in an old-fashioned woolen suit of a style of nearly ten years back. Its bedraggled, uneven skirt reached down to her ankles, while the sleeves of the coat came far short of her wrists. Her hair was arranged in an exaggerated fashion, with huge ear-puffs, according to her idea of the latest mode; and on her head was a dirty straw hat, trimmed with big artificial roses. She slouched into the room, dragging her muddy feet over the carpet, and threw herself into Mrs. Johnson's chair.

She glanced around the room with a look of the utmost disdain; then closed her jaw tightly, causing her lower lip to protrude, as is often the habit with persons of sullen dispositions. Marjorie caught sight of her attitude and could hardly repress a sigh of dismay; then she espied Frances, looking ner-

vous and unhappy, and her last hope vanished. Ruth must be right after all!

Miss Phillips sank into a chair opposite to Frieda, as if she were both mentally and physically exhausted. Then, breaking the silence at last, she remarked, in a tone which she tried to make pleasant,

"It's nice to be home, isn't it?"

But she received no reply from the girl. Her sullen expression never changed; it might seem that she had not heard Miss Phillips' remark.

"I guess Mrs. Johnson will be here in a minute," the latter added, cheerfully. "And then you can go to your room and wash."

Still there was no word or sign from Frieda. "She certainly isn't very appreciative," thought Marjorie; "but maybe she's homesick."

"Would you like to try on your new things?" asked Miss Phillips.

With a shrug of the utmost indifference, Frieda replied,

"I don't care!"

"You're not a bit homesick, are you, Frieda?" asked Frances, more, it would seem, as if to make conversation, than because she really thought there was any likelihood of this contingency.

The girl regarded her questioner scornfully.

"For them folks?" she asked sarcastically. "I don't want to see them no more!"

Frances sighed—and surrendered. Ever since she



and her Captain had met the country girl, she had tried to be friendly and sympathetic; in every instance Frieda had repulsed her in this rude manner. At first Frances had felt hurt; with a great deal of effort she had kept back the tears that the sharp replies would bring dangerously near to the surface. Then, too, the girl had been so outrageously ungrateful; she had almost made a scene in a store where Miss Phillips tried to buy a ten-dollar dress, and had declared that she would never wear it! Finally, they had compromised on a dark skirt and two middy blouses; but Frieda took no pains to hide her resentment at the cheapness of the clothing. Many of her remarks had been absolutely insulting; and now Frances was utterly disgusted with her, and wished that Pansy troop had taken Ruth Henry's advice, and let Frieda Hammer stay where she was till the end of her days.

Just at that moment Mrs. Johnson appeared with a great, warm smile of welcome on her motherly face. Surely, Frances thought, this would have melted the hardest heart. She and Miss Phillips both rose at her entrance; but Frieda sat perfectly still, and gave no indication that she was aware of the other's presence.

"Stand up, Frieda," commanded Miss Phillips, pleasantly, and the girl shuffled to her feet, still keeping her eyes fixed on the piano.

"Mrs. Johnson, this is Frieda Hammer. Frieda,

you are very lucky to have such a lovely home, and such a kind, adopted mother! Won't you shake hands?"

The girl thrust out her hand awkwardly, still avoiding the eyes of the older woman. "A bad sign"—thought Mrs. Johnson, unconsciously—"she never seems to look anyone in the eyes."

"I will take you to your room, my dear," she said. "Then you can come down again and have something to eat!"

This last remark was made with a side glance at Miss Phillips, and a twinkle in her eye. But for once the latter did not respond; she was so discouraged and mentally worn-out, that she had completely forgotten the surprise party.

"Don't want nuthing!" protested Frieda, rudely. And, seizing her bag, she followed Mrs. Johnson up the stairs.

As soon as she was out of sight, the girls began to move cautiously from their hiding places. But suddenly they all stood perfectly still, arrested by the unbelievable words they now heard, which Frieda literally shouted at kind Mrs. Johnson.

"You ain't a-going to put me in the attic!" Her bag fell to the floor with a bang. "I didn't come here to be no servant girl! I knew there was a trick to it!"

"But, my dear——" Mrs. Johnson's soft voice

pleaded in words that were not distinguishable to the girls below.

By this time the Scouts were gathered about the piano. Frances sank on the sofa and buried her face in her hands, and Miss Phillips sighed deeply. Marjorie looked frightened, as if something dreadful were about to happen. Ruth alone was unaffected; she had been right from the first!

"Oh, Ruth!" cried Frances, forgetting all about the surprise party. "If we only had taken your advice!" Her voice died in a wail.

"Sh!" cautioned Marjorie. "Oh, girls, don't let's give up! Please! Let's try our song. Maybe that—and the ice-cream——"

But to her dismay, she received no word of encouragement from Miss Phillips. Their Captain seemed to have reached the lowest depths of despair.

Ethel, however, struck the chord, and the girls chimed in weakly. Then, the music, strengthening their hopes as it progressed, made them more cheerful. Loudly, they brought out the words of the chorus:

"Frieda dear, Frieda dear, we're so glad you're here!  
Frieda dear, Frieda dear, your Scout friends are  
near——"

and they fairly shouted the name in hope of evoking some response.

But none came; in five minutes Mrs. Johnson re-appeared with wet eyes. She felt so sorry for the Scouts.

"It's no use, girls," she said, sadly; "she wouldn't come down. And when I stepped out into the hall to show her the big closet for her wraps, she locked the door in my face!"

Marjorie burst into tears and hid her face on her room-mate's shoulder. She felt as if she had never been more disappointed, even when she failed to make the Scout troop.

"Don't cry, dear," said Mrs. Johnson, "she'll come around in time. Now let's have the party, anyway. Suppose you change it, and have it in honor of me instead! Day after to-morrow is my birthday!"

Marjorie looked up, smiling through her tears; and the girls all went out to prepare the refreshments. Miss Phillips flashed Mrs. Johnson a grateful look; the tact and good sense of the older woman had prevented the misfortune from becoming a tragedy.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE JAPANESE FÊTE

WHEN the disappointed girls left Mrs. Johnson's home at the conclusion of the surprise party, Marjorie probably looked most dejected of all. She resolutely avoided Ruth's society, feeling that she could not bear her "I told you so" attitude; instead, she sought Lily, who seemed to understand how she felt. The girls walked in silence; Lily knew her room-mate well enough now to realize that talking would not help, and she discreetly refrained from intruding upon her thoughts.

When they reached their own room, Marjorie threw herself upon the bed with a sob. Lily sat down beside her and put her arm around her neck.

"Marj, please don't take it so hard," she begged. "It won't do any good."

"Of course it won't," Marjorie replied, brokenly. "But I cared so much about her liking us."

"Well, she may, yet. Maybe she was frightened—and homesick. Why don't you go down to see her all by yourself?"

The suggestion brought Marjorie a ray of hope. She dried her eyes, and squeezed Lily's hand gratefully.

"I certainly will do that!" she exclaimed. "Thank you for suggesting it."

The following day, Sunday, was mild and beautiful; Marjorie was so glad to see that the rain was gone, and so hopeful about her new project, that she felt quite cheerful again. She selected one of her prettiest dresses—a pale pink voile—and also wore her pink silk sweater which matched it so perfectly.

"I won't bother with a hat," she thought. "It's so warm, and it will seem more informal without one."

It was only a few minutes' walk to Mrs. Johnson's house, and she reached it in no time. With trembling fingers, she rang the doorbell. The woman herself answered the summons.

"How do you do, Mrs. Johnson?" she said pleasantly. And then, just as if she were paying an ordinary call on one of her own friends, "Is Frieda in?"

Mrs. Johnson smiled. "Yes. Do come in, and sit down—Marjorie—isn't that your name? Let's talk a little first, and then I'll call her."

Marjorie sat down upon the edge of the sofa, and leaned forward eagerly. She was curious for news of this strange girl, who so baffled everybody, even Miss Phillips and kind Mrs. Johnson.

"She isn't civilized, Marjorie," said the older woman. "That's exactly what it is; she has lived

with people all of her life who have no conception of morals, or manners, or training, and she simply acts like a sort of mental savage."

"But there were the Brubakers—her father worked for Mr. Brubaker. Don't you suppose——?"

"No; I don't suppose she ever saw anything of them. She is used to wandering about just as she pleases. Whatever education she has acquired was probably beaten into her by some rough, country schoolmaster."

Marjorie sighed hopelessly.

Mrs. Johnson read her thoughts. "But it isn't hopeless, my dear," she added softly. "Frieda is a human being, with a soul. And she is young, too. If we can keep her here, away from her parents' bad influence, we may yet be able to civilize her. Don't give up yet!"

Marjorie was unconsciously encouraged by these words. But she wanted more definite details of the girl's behavior.

"I sent her supper to her last night," said Mrs. Johnson, "by Annie, the girl who comes in to help me cook and wash dishes. She said that Frieda opened the door and snarled at her something which she could not understand, except the word 'servant,' and snatched the food and slammed the door in her face.

"She did not appear at breakfast, but I heard her

go out for a walk; and when she came back, I was home from church and had dinner on the table. I asked her to come in, and she followed me to the dining-room.

"When I introduced her to father and mother, and Mr. Johnson, she paid not the slightest attention. Her manners at the table were terrible; she evidently knew nothing about the use of a knife and fork. She ate greedily, as if she were very hungry. And, by the way, I think the girl is decidedly undernourished.

"Immediately after dinner she went to her room again. Now, if you want to go up and see her, you can do as you like. You know the facts."

Marjorie jumped to her feet.

"Oh, I will go!" she cried impulsively. "There must be some good in her."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. Johnson, "or else she would not have consented to come here."

Marjorie lowered her eyelids. She was thinking of that remark of Ruth's: that Frieda had only seized the opportunity as another chance to steal something. But she resolutely suppressed the idea; she did not want to antagonize Mrs. Johnson to any greater extent against the girl.

Up the steps she ran, two at a time, so that she might not have time to lose courage and change her mind. She knocked at the door of the room.

"Who is it?" This, gruffly.

"It's Marjorie—Marjorie Wilkinson! The girl



with the canoe. I want to take you for a ride in my boat!" This last proposal was made on the inspiration of the moment.

To her surprise, she heard Frieda step forward and unlock the door.

"Whew!" she whistled, gazing at Marjorie's costume in open-mouthed amazement. "Some dress!"

Marjorie smiled, all the while noting with pleasure the changed appearance of the other. For Frieda wore the pleated skirt and middy that Miss Phillips had bought for her the day before, and her hair was arranged quite simply in the style Frances Wright adopted, without, of course, the artificial ear-puffs.

"How nice you look, Frieda!" she observed, admiringly.

"None of that!" shouted the other girl. "This dress makes me sick, when I look at yours!"

Marjorie perceived the jealousy in Frieda's eyes, and hastened to change the subject.

"Will you go out in my canoe with me now?"

"Nope! Not in this rig!"

"But Frieda——"

"If you like it so much," she interrupted, "you wear it—and give me yours!"

Now Marjorie's pink voile was one of her favorite dresses, and she had counted upon wearing it in the evenings all winter. But it was not really expensive, and she felt that she would gladly part with it if it would effect a reconciliation. The sweater

would be a weightier matter; it had been a birthday gift from her father. Still, she would sacrifice that, too, on the altar of this, her greatest desire of the present time.

She considered making a bargain and exacting a promise of friendship from the girl, but this, she felt, might antagonize her. So she merely said,

"All right, Frieda; but you can't wear this to school. I'll wear yours back to the dormitory, and then I'll put on another dress and give this back to you again."

Frieda could hardly believe her ears when she saw Marjorie actually take off her sweater and start to unfasten her dress. Then she clapped her hands with delight; she was not so uncivilized as to lack the feminine characteristic of love of pretty clothing.

The change was effected quickly, and the girls walked out together and back to Miss Allen's where Marjorie changed the dress; and then to the lake. Marjorie tried to talk naturally, but, only receiving monosyllables as replies, finally gave up. Untying the canoe, and taking the paddle from the bottom, she bade Frieda get in, and pushed off.

"Ain't it locked?" asked Frieda in astonishment.

"No, everybody here is honest. And people from outside the school don't know about it."

They drifted on, Marjorie glancing now and then at her companion, who sat back lazily—in fact, almost contentedly—watching the sky and the water,

and listening to the rhythmic dip of the paddle. A wave of great happiness surged over Marjorie; she felt that she had progressed farther than she would have dreamed possible, after the previous day's experience.

"Frieda, will you come to our Japanese party on Friday evening, if I give you a ticket?" asked Marjorie, as she left the girl at Mrs. Johnson's.

"Maybe. What's it going to be like?"

Marjorie explained the plans, but she saw that they conveyed little meaning to the country girl. Nevertheless, she resolved to send her a ticket.

It happened that Friday night, which was the last of September, was clear and mild; the stars twinkled brightly over the pretty scene at the edge of the lake. Japanese lanterns were strung all about the trees, and the tables, containing refreshments, were decorated with gay autumn flowers. Robed in Japanese kimonas, with long, Oriental pins in their hair, the girls flitted about from place to place, welcoming their guests and serving the dainty food. Out on the lake, where Marjorie was drifting in her canoe, a victrola was playing soft music.

"The boat reminds one of Venice," observed Miss Allen, who was one of the first to arrive. "I believe I'd enjoy a ride!"

Lily, to whom the remark was directed, whistled softly to her room-mate. Instantly, the girl turned around, and made for the shore.

"Venice or Japan, whichever you like, Miss Allen," laughed Lily, "just so long as we make the money—for the cause is a good one, you know."

Teachers, girls from the school, people from the village,—a larger crowd than the Scouts had dared to hope for—continued to arrive. Charmed by the novel idea, they bought lavishly; and few escaped without first visiting the fortune-telling booth presided over by Miss Phillips, or taking a ride in one of the row-boats, or in Marjorie's canoe.

All the while, however, Marjorie watched anxiously for the appearance of Frieda. Would the girl disappoint her? Marjorie had been so busy during the week that she had not been able to go to see her, but Mrs. Johnson had told Miss Phillips that Frieda had gone regularly to school, and that her teacher reported progress.

Towards nine o'clock, however, just as Marjorie was landing her canoe with two of the teachers who had been for a ride, she caught sight of a familiar pink dress.

Ruth, who had joined their group in order to serve the guests with ice-cream, also noticed the newcomer.

"I wonder who that is!" remarked Ruth, vainly attempting to identify the girl in the dim light. "She's all dolled up, too!"

A smile spread over Marjorie's face, and she waved her hand in welcome. Frieda advanced slowly, as if she were not sure that she desired to

join the group. When she was within half a dozen steps of them, Ruth recognized her.

"Frieda Hammer!" announced Ruth, in a stage whisper that was perfectly audible to the girl herself. Then, turning to the others, and laughing, she added, "Hold on to your jewelry! Nothing's safe——"

"Sh!" cautioned Marjorie, in the deepest distress. "Do be careful, Ruth. She'll hear you!"

But the girl had evidently overheard the remark, for a hard look came into her eyes. She grit her teeth fiercely, but said nothing; then, turning swiftly around, she disappeared among the trees.

The older women, sensing a scene, sauntered away; but Ruth stood where she was, smiling defiantly. Marjorie might have cried, had she not been so angry.

"It's all your fault!" she exclaimed; "Frieda was just getting friendly, and here you had to spoil it! Just the way you spoil everything I try to do!"

"Calm yourself, Marj!" remarked Ruth, with a superior air. "She can't feel things like we do! Besides, she is a thief, so why not call her one?"

"Would you like to have all your sins thrown in your face?" retorted Marjorie. "And you know——"

"May I have a canoe ride?" said a pleasant voice behind them, and the girls turned around to see Mrs. Johnson, with her husband, standing near them.

"Certainly," murmured Marjorie, ashamed of her loss of temper, and hoping that the others had not heard the angry words. Ruth turned away, and Marjorie once more paddled out on the lake. But the evening was spoiled for her.

For Frieda Hammer had again been antagonized!

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE HOCKEY TEAM

"MARJORIE!"

Lily Andrews, entering the room, found it necessary to speak twice before she aroused the attention of her room-mate, who was seated on her couch, idly fingering the geometry book she was supposed to be studying, and looking into space. Lily could not remember when she had seen her look so dejected. But she had a piece of news that she thought would bring a smile to Marjorie's lips.

"Miss Phillips wants you!"

"She does! What for?" This, eagerly.

"Oh, I don't know—hockey, or something, I guess!"

The look of happiness died from Marjorie's face. She seemed tremendously disappointed. Lily looked at her questioningly; heretofore, the girl had always been delighted to be summoned by her favorite teacher, for no matter what purpose.

"What's the matter, Marj?"

"Nothing; only I hoped that maybe it had something to do with Scouts."

"With Scouts?"

"Well—with Frieda, then!" This explanation was given rather grudgingly, and with a greater degree of impatience than she was wont to use with Lily.

"Didn't you tell me you hoped she'd come to the Japanese fete, Marj?" pursued the other.

"Yes; and she did come!"

"But I didn't see her!"

"Well, then you missed her, that's all." Marjorie arose from her seat, as if to end a very distasteful conversation.

But Lily was not through.

"Marj, is it true that you gave her your pink dress?"

"Yes, it is."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Lily, in the most relieved tone. "Ruth saw Frieda wearing it—and your sweater besides—and she said Frieda stole it!"

"And you believed that!" Marjorie's eyes flashed in anger. "Oh, Lil, how could you?"

"Well, you didn't tell me; and you know she did steal before. So Ruth thought probably——"

"Ruth Henry makes me sick!" exclaimed Marjorie, now tried to the utmost. "And I'll bet she got you to pump me——"

"No, not exactly," replied Lily, a little ashamed



of her questions; "but we were both curious to know."

Marjorie shook her head with disgust, and resolved to say nothing further.

"Where is Miss Phillips?" she asked.

"In her office."

"Thanks."

Without another word, she left the room, and went straight to the gymnasium.

"Good afternoon!" said Miss Phillips, pleasantly, as Marjorie entered the little office; "sit down here. I want to talk about the hockey squad."

"Yes, of course," murmured Marjorie, making a great effort to collect her thoughts and show an interest in the conversation.

"And I consulted you first," continued Miss Phillips, "because you have been at practice most faithfully, and played the best of anyone since the beginning of the term."

The compliment, which should have brought happiness to the girl, only touched her lightly; she hardly acknowledged it with a weak smile. Picking up a pencil, she ran the thick end along the edge of the desk, as if she were giving the teacher only a small part of her attention. Miss Phillips noticed and was annoyed, but she said nothing. She realized that even the loveliest characters experience perverse moods.

"I have decided on yourself, Ruth Henry, Ethel

Todd, Frances Wright, and Mae Van Horn for forwards; Edith Evans and Marian Guard for two of the half-backs, and Lily Andrews for goal. That leaves one half-back and two full-backs yet to be chosen, and I think we ought to have about five substitutes. Now whom do you suggest? Let's think of each class in turn."

Marjorie concentrated her attention upon the matter at hand, and thought hard.

"Is Helen Stewart's ankle all right by now?" she asked. The latter, who was to have been the heroine in the play at the last Commencement, had sprained her ankle the day that the Scouts had entertained a group of settlement children, and had been obliged to give up athletics for a while. Apparently, however, she was all right now.

"Yes; but it isn't very strong. Suppose we put her as one of the substitutes?"

"All right," agreed Marjorie.

"And there's nobody else in the senior class."

"No."

"Nor in the junior. Ada Mearns could play well, if she would only try, but she won't bother. Now what do you think about your own class?"

"Could Doris Sands possibly——?"

"Marjorie!" reproved Miss Phillips. "You're letting your personal feelings enter into the consideration. Doris Sands is very sweet and very capable, but—she's no hockey player!"

"That's true," admitted Marjorie. "Well, how about Evelyn Hopkins? She never seems to get anything."

But again the teacher shook her head. "Evelyn doesn't go about things right," she answered. "Individually, she's a good player, but she's miserable in team work. Evelyn plays selfishly."

Marjorie smiled; Miss Phillips seemed to sum up the girl's character correctly.

"Of course, Mae's new; do you think she will make good, Captain?"

"There's no doubt about it," replied Miss Phillips positively; "making the sorority last year was bad for Mae VanHorn, but losing out on the Scout troop was a good thing. All of her best friends are Scouts, and she certainly has buckled down to work well. The other teachers tell me she is getting along beautifully thus far in her lessons."

"We can never get seven girls out of the freshman class!" remarked Marjorie, skeptically.

"Then we'll just appoint the best ones for the regular positions, and trust to luck for substitutes till we have a regular game. It's all we can do!"

"Well, Edith Evans' sister Florence can play almost any position," said Marjorie. "She surely is a dandy girl; I think she'll be another like Edith."

"Let's put her in for full-back; that's a mighty important position," suggested Miss Phillips. "And

what do you think of Alice Endicott? She's certainly worked hard!"

Marjorie's eyes brightened; she wanted that little homesick girl, whom she had been pleased to call "her freshman," to win out. A shadow crossed her face as she thought how she had neglected her lately, while all her thoughts were centered on Frieda Hammer. And Alice appreciated every little attention so much, while Frieda was so ungrateful.

"I'm so glad you think so," she said enthusiastically; "I have watched her, too, and I think she could hold her own as half-back."

"Oh, that reminds me," exclaimed Miss Phillips, "I think Daisy Gravers could play full-back."

The team was complete.

It became apparent that Marjorie was anxious to dismiss the subject, for she rose to go.

"But we have only one substitute," remarked Miss Phillips.

Marjorie paused a moment before she replied. Then,

"What would you think of Barbara Hill?"

"Good—but erratic. Yes, she'd do for a sub forward. All right, then, I'll notify the girls, and call a meeting to elect a captain. We must beat Miss Martin's this year!"

Marjorie flushed at the recollection of the previous year's game, which, she had always considered, she had lost for her school.

"Let's make everybody go into training this year!" she said, prompted by the recollection.

"All right!" agreed Miss Phillips. Then, abruptly changing the subject, she looked straight into Marjorie's eyes, and asked softly,

"What's the matter, Marjorie?"

The girl colored again under her scrutiny. But there was no use in attempting to hide anything from the Captain.

"Oh, just about Frieda! I'm discouraged."

Miss Phillips rose, and laid her hand upon her shoulder.

"Don't worry, dear; it will be all right in the end. But it is a long process. Anyhow, I have kept in close touch with Frieda's public school teachers, and they say that she is attending to her work, and making good headway. She even stays after school for extra instruction. And you know, Marjorie, there is nothing—except perhaps religion—that can change a person like education."

The Captain's cheerful words encouraged Marjorie.

"We did make a good deal on the Japanese fête, didn't we?" she asked.

"Over a hundred dollars! And the returns aren't all in yet."

"Well, I will try to be patient," said Marjorie, walking toward the door of the office. Then, turning around, she added,

"Miss Phillips, couldn't you urge *all* the Scouts to adopt a friendly attitude toward Frieda? We'll never get anywhere till they do!"

"I didn't know they hadn't!" replied Miss Phillips; "but I will deliver a gentle lecture at next Scout meeting if you think there is any doubt."

Marjorie flashed her grateful look, and was gone. Temporarily, she felt cheered and relieved, but she knew that the feeling would not last. Deep in her subconscious mind, she sensed dangerous rocks ahead, and probably treacherous waters to go through, before Frieda would be safe—morally safe—as she and Lily and all her friends, were safe.

But she would be brave; she would not cross her bridges before she came to them!

## CHAPTER IX

## THE LOST CANOE

IT WAS in October that the hockey squad was announced, and a meeting held. The list of names which Miss Phillips posted upon the bulletin-board was examined with breathless interest by every girl in the school; for there would be no new Scouts chosen from among those who had not already qualified in hockey.

Except among the fortunate few, a great feeling of disappointment prevailed all over the school. Girls who knew that their report marks would be high, and who had looked eagerly forward to becoming Girl Scouts of Pansy troop, were sick with despair at falling short of the coveted goal.

For the same reason, however, the few new girls who had made the team appreciated the honor all the more. It meant a great deal to Mae VanHorn, who had lost out the previous year, and who cared more for Marjorie and Frances and Ethel, than any of the other girls in the school. It brought a feeling of pride to Barbara Hill, who admired Ruth so

ardently. But perhaps it carried the greatest happiness of all to the three freshmen who were chosen—Florence Evans, Alice Endicott, and Daisy Gravers. If their marks would only permit them to become Girl Scouts!

For the past week Marjorie had been happy. With an easy majority, she had been elected captain of the team, and the position and the popularity pleased her. Then, too, she spent much of her time with Alice Endicott, who simply bubbled over with joyousness all the time, so that it would have required real trouble to allow anyone to be sad in her presence. And Frieda, although she had never gone so far again in accepting Marjorie's friendship as she had on that first Sunday afternoon, was at least civil. She treated Mrs. Johnson with a fair degree of courtesy, but she seemed to distrust the Scouts, and avoided them on every occasion. At one time Pansy troop had invited her to go with them on a hike, but she had refused in a formal little note, written in an uneven hand, and evidently dictated by her teacher.

"It must have been that insulting remark of Ruth's, the night of the fête!" Marjorie assured herself, over and over. "Except for that, we'd probably be good friends by now!"

Then she would remind herself that Frieda really was progressing, that the troop was doing its part, and that there was actually no cause to worry.



On one afternoon that was warm and beautiful, and for which there was no hockey practice scheduled, she was debating in her mind what to do, when Lily threw open the door.

"Marj!" she exclaimed, "inside, on a day like this!"

"Oh, I'm going out," her room-mate replied slowly. "Only I can't decide where. What are you going to do?"

"Play tennis with Doris."

"That's nice."

She watched Lily put on her bloomers, which the girls were allowed to wear on their own courts, and her sneakers, still undecided as to her course of action.

"Want to play, too?" invited Lily. "Why not get Ruth, and we'll make it doubles?"

Marjorie wrinkled her nose; in her own mind she still harbored resentment against Ruth, and the idea of her company was rather distasteful.

"No—thanks! I don't want to do anything very strenuous."

A knock sounded at their door, and in answer to Lily's cheery, "Come!" Alice Endicott entered.

"If I bother you people too much, just put me out!" she announced gaily. "I simply must have company!"

"Not homesick?" asked Marjorie.

"No, indeed! Only I want to go for a walk, or

do something; and your society's so infinitely more pleasant than my own——"

"I'll tell you what I'll do," interrupted Marjorie. "Let's go canoeing!"

Alice clapped her hands with delight. She had never been out in Marjorie's canoe since the day when their friendship had really started, and she longed to be invited again.

"Oh, how lovely!" she cried. "And it's such a perfect day!"

"I'll have to send it home at Thanksgiving," remarked Marjorie, as she and Alice crossed the campus on their way to the lake. "And I don't know how I'll ever do without it."

"Oh, well, there will be skating," Alice reminded her. "And then, it will soon be spring again."

They came in sight of the tree to which Marjorie always kept the canoe tied, and she looked anxiously, as usual, for the first sight of it. Suddenly, her heart stopped beating: she could not see it!

"Alice!" she shrieked, in terror. "It's gone!"

Alice followed Marjorie's gaze, but she, too, saw no canoe. However, she attributed no particular significance to that fact.

"It's probably around the other side," she said optimistically: "or maybe you tied it to another tree."

But as the girls came nearer to the spot, Marjorie knew that she had been right. They looked all

around the small lake; but the canoe was nowhere to be found!

"Somebody's borrowed it!" suggested Alice, "and probably couldn't find you to ask permission!"

"But then they'd be on the lake!"

"No—if you should carry the canoe about a hundred yards, you'd find the stream gets deep enough to paddle. And it goes a long way, too, even joins a river. I know because once Daisy and I hiked and hiked, meaning to follow it to the end. There were several swift places where you might have to carry the canoe a few yards, but it could easily be done."

Marjorie's face brightened at the hope the words offered.

"Let's walk up that way ourselves," she suggested.

Climbing the school fence at the edge of the lake, they followed a little creek, which, though shallow in many places, could still be navigated by a canoe.

"Why didn't any of us ever think of this?" remarked Marjorie. "I've never had the canoe off the lake."

"Couldn't we try it to-morrow?" asked Alice, wondering whether it were quite the thing for her to suggest.

"Yes, I'd love to!" replied Marjorie. But her expression grew sad again, as she recalled the circumstances which led them on this walk of exploration.

The woods were wonderful now, dressed in their

gorgeously colored foliage. Brown, orange, scarlet, with just enough somber evergreen to set off the brilliancy of the other trees by contrast, the scene was at the height of its splendor. But so intent were the girls upon watching the water, they hardly noticed the spectacle.

"Look! Look!" cried Alice suddenly. "There—around that bend! Isn't that the end of a canoe?"

Marjorie held her hand to her forehead, and shaded her eyes in an effort to distinguish the object in the distance. But, although she saw what Alice meant, it was too far off for identification. In their eagerness, the girls started to run.

Marjorie was the first to stop, realizing her mistake.

"It's a dead tree trunk!" she gasped, out of breath from the exertion.

She stopped and leaned against a tree, tired out and disappointed. But she resolutely conquered her desire to cry: whatever happened, she must not break down before a freshman!

"Let's go back," she said. "I'm awfully tired."

"We might as well," said Alice. "For whoever has borrowed it will be sure to bring it back by supper time."

"Perhaps; but somehow I feel as if it were gone forever! I can't tell you why——"

"Oh, please don't worry, Marj!" begged the younger girl. "Nobody would take it!"

They went to Marjorie's room, and discussed the occurrence over and over. Alice stayed until half-past five, when Lily came back from tennis.

"Too dark to play!" cried Lily as she threw open the door. "Heavens, why sit in darkness?"

Marjorie and Alice had hardly noticed the gradually deepening twilight, so wrapped up were they in the event of the afternoon. They blinked as Lily flashed on the lights.

"Who won?" asked Marjorie, half-heartedly.

"Doris, of course!" This carelessly. Then, looking closely at her room-mate, she realized that something was wrong.

"What's happened, Marj? No bad news from home?"

"Oh, no—it isn't that." Marjorie swallowed hard, in the effort to keep her voice calm. Then, blurting it out, "I've lost my canoe!"

Lily stood perfectly still in open-mouthed amazement, while Alice, assisted here and there by Marjorie, told of the afternoon's adventure. But Lily smiled reassuringly.

"You're worrying yourself needlessly, Marj. Somebody's borrowed it, of course! It couldn't have drifted away—there's no place for it to drift—and surely nobody would steal it!"

"Somebody must have!" declared Marjorie, feeling now that any moment she would break down. To her relief, Alice arose to go.

As soon as the door closed upon the retreating freshman, Marjorie began to sob violently. Lily went over and sat beside her.

"Don't, Marj, please don't!" she begged. "Wait till after supper, at least. I'll go over and tell Miss Allen all about it the minute I'm dressed, and we'll see what she can do."

Marjorie dried her eyes, and the girls got ready for supper. In fifteen minutes, Lily was ready to go.

"Tell Miss Allen not to make any announcement till the very end of the meal, so that if I get any news of the canoe, I can let her know."

But Marjorie was disappointed to find that no one came up to her with an explanation or an apology. Unfortunately, too, all the girls were present at the meal—a circumstance which left her no room for the hope that one of her school-mates had the canoe.

Just as dessert was being served, she caught Miss Allen's questioning eyes fastened upon hers, and she shook her head sadly in reply to the silent interrogation. Accordingly, the Principal arose and told Marjorie's story, and asked whether anyone had seen the canoe. But there was no response.

"Girls, I don't suspect anybody," she said, after a few minutes of silence, "but just for the sake of formality, I will call a meeting for eight o'clock this evening and ask every girl where she was early this

afternoon, for Marjorie tells me that she saw it herself at one o'clock."

"Oh, Miss Allen!" interrupted Marjorie, much to everyone's consternation, "I really don't want to go as far as that! I am sure that none of the girls took it."

"Somebody might have taken it for a prank," remarked the Principal, without administering any reproof for the interruption. "And we may as well go on with the investigation."

There was not a single girl at the school who dared to absent herself from that meeting. Miss Allen herself presided, and, beginning with the senior class, she requested each girl in turn to rise and state where she had spent the early part of the afternoon.

"And whenever another girl can confirm a statement, I wish she would do so," added Miss Allen.

The meeting proceeded rapidly; the girls, a little nervous at the recital in public of their own affairs, nevertheless spoke swiftly; and, without a single exception, their statements were all confirmed by other girls.

The whole proceeding served only to intensify Marjorie's despondency. Now, she felt, the girls might think that she suspected them, which in reality had never been the case. When Miss Allen had suggested a joke, her mind naturally flew to Ruth; but now that the whole affair had assumed such serious

proportions, she dismissed that solution from her thoughts.

The last freshman in the school was recounting her afternoon's program, when one of the housemaids threw open the door.

The faces all swung instantly around, and the speaker became silent. The newcomer announced her mission without delay:

"An important message for Miss Phillips," she said. "I took it over the telephone."

"Will you give it to me?" asked the latter, rising and advancing to take what she expected to be a written message.

"Yes, ma'am; I didn't write it down," she replied. And before Miss Phillips could warn her not to inform the whole school, she shouted out, to the surprise of everyone,

*"Mrs. Johnson sent word that Frieda Hammer has been missing since half-past one this afternoon."*

"With Marjorie Wilkinson's canoe!" exclaimed Ruth, in a tone that was audible all over the assembly room.



## CHAPTER X

## THE HALLOWE'EN PARTY

THE meeting which Miss Allen had begun with such formality ended in a turmoil. Everyone jumped up excitedly at the news of Frieda's disappearance and at the interpretation which Ruth gave to the occurrence.

For all the girls in the school—even those who were not Scouts—knew about Frieda Hammer. They were aware, too, of the fact that the Japanese fête had been given to raise money to support her, and it was common knowledge that over a hundred dollars had been cleared.

But only the Scouts themselves knew the details: that, after five weeks' board had been paid in advance, Frieda had been given fifteen dollars, which she was to use for her ticket home on Thanksgiving. This idea had been Marjorie's; she wanted by some such outward sign to testify to the girl that the Scouts trusted her. Miss Phillips, Ruth, and one or two others had opposed the plan, but Marjorie's enthusiasm had finally carried it.

So now Marjorie had this double tragedy to face: she had not only lost her canoe, but her confidence had been betrayed. And Ruth, who had prophesied something of the sort from the first, had triumphed!

Miss Phillips was too wise to call a Scout meeting immediately; she wanted to give the discussion a chance to simmer down. Besides this, she felt deeply for Marjorie. The girl had encountered a terrible disappointment; older and more experienced people than Marjorie had broken down under parallel circumstances. Miss Phillips wanted to give her a good chance to cry; after that, she depended upon Lily's good sense and tact to console her.

Accordingly, nothing was done until the next night, when Miss Phillips called the Scouts to a meeting.

The subject was hardly mentioned before Ruth Henry sprang to her feet.

"Captain," she began, talking rather fast, for she had in her own mind a number of points that she wished to make, "we all have to admit that we have failed. The idea—social service, Good Turn, whatever you want to call it—is splendid; but the person we selected, unworthy. Let's forget all about it; for we can't get back Marjorie's canoe. It's probably sold by now.

"Well, this is my suggestion: hold our bazaar just as we have planned, and use the money, first to buy Marjorie a new canoe, and then to bring a nice

Christmas to some needy family, in the village, with lots of children."

"Hurray! Good for you, Ruth!" cried several of the girls impulsively when she sat down.

Amid their shouts, however, Marjorie stumbled to her feet. She looked pale, as if she had slept little the previous night; and her eyes bore the traces of tears. But outwardly she was calm.

"It is awfully good of Ruth," she said, seriously, "but I really wouldn't want the troop to replace my canoe. I won't need it much longer this fall, and perhaps father will give me one for my next birthday. And I like Ruth's suggestion about the poor family. But"—she lowered her voice and pronounced each word slowly and very distinctly—"is the troop going to accept this defeat as final?"

"You mean, Marjorie, that you would like to give Frieda another chance?" asked the Captain.

"Yes." The word was little more than a whisper.

Miss Phillips said nothing; she was simply astounded at the girl's generosity. Frieda Hammer had stolen Marjorie's dearest possession, and yet the latter was ready to forgive her!

But Ruth interpreted Marjorie's attitude merely as the usual opposition to her own suggestions.

"Then would you like to put a detective on the case?" she asked.

"No! A thousand times, no!" protested Marjorie, emphatically.

"Then what could we do to trace her?"

"I could at least telegraph to her mother, with a prepaid reply," put in Miss Phillips.

"Oh, do—please do!" begged Marjorie; and the affair rested at that.

"Now," said Ethel, anxious to change the subject, "let's talk about our Hallowe'en party. It's only a little over a week off!"

The tone of the meeting changed from that of serious-minded discussion of a theft and its treatment, to care-free chatter about an evening of fun. Even Marjorie put aside her trouble for the time and entered heartily into the preparations.

The Hallowe'en party was to be the last event of the Scout troop as it now stood. The day following—November first—the reports would be issued, and the new Scouts would officially join the troop at the next meeting. This would necessitate new divisions into the patrols, re-elections, etc.

The fifteen girls who now belonged to Pansy troop felt especially close together. All, except Helen Stewart and Anna Cane, had lived side by side at camp, eaten at the same table, gathered around the same camp fire at night, been comrades on many hikes, and competed in the contest which Marjorie had so unexpectedly won. They wanted their troop to grow, and to take in new girls, espe-

cially if a troop was to be established at the rival seminary: but they were glad to be allowed this party for themselves.

The day after the Scout meeting, Miss Phillips sent a telegram to Frieda Hammer's mother, and received the following reply:

"No signs of Frieda. Is she kidnapped?—M. Hammer."

Marjorie's last hopes vanished as she read the telegram. There was nothing to be done; she must be content to give up her dream. Miss Phillips suggested that the girl might come back again after her money was all spent; upon this meager supposition Marjorie fastened her expectations.

In the meantime, preparations for the Hallowe'en party were in full swing. Miss Phillips had suggested that each girl dress to represent a character in history.

"Choose a man or a woman, whichever you please," she told them; "but don't try to get your parents to send you costumes! Make them yourselves, for they needn't be too elaborate. Then we can guess which one each character represents, as well as the identity of the girl who wears the costume."

The gymnasium was decorated with corn stalks and autumn leaves, and here and there against the walls stood stuffed paper witches, to remind the guests that it was really Hallowe'en. Weird, soft

music was coming from the victrola to remind one that ghosts were abroad that night.

George and Martha Washington, with powdered hair and silver buckled shoes were the first guests to be greeted by the committee. Soon after them came Pocohontas, and a Quaker who was intended to be Elizabeth Fry, but who might have represented almost any member of the Society of Friends.

Marjorie and Lily came as John Alden and Priscilla—proud because they were on time for once, and enjoying the fun of acting the part of lovers.

"It reminds me of the masquerade at camp," whispered Marjorie; "remember?"

"Yes, wasn't that ridiculous? But you know this is really clever. Oh, look at these!"

Eight masqueraders, all dressed as women and representing various characters from Queen Elizabeth to Florence Nightingale, came in, walking rather awkwardly, as if hampered by their skirts.

"But who can they be?"

"There are too many of them!" laughed Lily; "wouldn't you say that there were more than fifteen of us here now?"

Lily made an effort to count, but the guests moved so constantly that the act was almost impossible. However, when seven more masqueraders arrived in a group, the girls' suspicions were confirmed. Miss Phillips must have invited outsiders! Perhaps she even knew the marks, and from them was

able to ascertain which girls would be Girl Scouts, and wishing to surprise the troop, had secretly invited them.

The riddle was too much for them; Lily gave it up, and returned to the fun of acting the part of lover to Marjorie. She was just putting her arm affectionately about her room-mate, when the trained nurse, who was supposed to represent Florence Nightingale, approached, and, in a very squeaky, obviously disguised voice, said,

"I'm jealous, young man. Won't you please kiss me?"

Lily laughingly leaned toward the intruder and was about to grant the request, when her eyes fell upon the nurse's hand. It could not belong to a girl!

"Who are you?" she demanded indignantly.

"Florence Nightingale!"

Lily stamped her foot impatiently. "No, I mean in real life!"

The other raised the mask obediently, and to the girls' astonishment, revealed himself as Dick Roberts!

"The Boy Scouts!" cried Lily, out loud, and the news spread like wild fire.

The guessing began, and the votes were taken. After a few moments, the prize was awarded to General Pershing—a girl, evidently—who was dressed in a real Army uniform, adorned with many

medals and campaign bars. Across the front, on a white ribbon, she wore, to the amusement of everyone, these letters:

"COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF!"

That, and her mustache, made a mistake impossible.

But no one guessed her identity, until Marjorie noticing her hands, exclaimed,

"Ruth Henry!" and the victor laughingly unmasked.

It was another triumph for Ruth!

Miss Phillips called for the boys to volunteer to carry in the tubs of water filled with apples, and as Marjorie watched the proceeding a homesick feeling stole over her. John Hadley was no longer there!

She glanced at Lily, radiant with the excitement and pleasure, and decided that she, too, would find some boy to be interested in. Turning around at the mention of her own name, she found David Conner waiting to put her name on his dance program.

The Scouts played games and danced until ten o'clock, and then Miss Phillips announced that refreshments were ready in the basement.

"The basement!" repeated Frances, in amazement. "Do you mean that, Captain?"

"Yes; and we are going to reach it through the underground connection between the gym and the main building," explained Miss Phillips; "so we



shall walk over to the main hall and go down the cellar and then follow single file through this dark passage to the basement. You may see something weird!"

"Who's going to lead?" asked Ruth, her eyes shining with excitement.

"We'll draw lots!"

And, by the irony of chance, the part fell to Doris Sands, the most timid girl in the troop.

"Oh, Captain, I'll die of fright!" she protested.

"It's only play, Doris! You won't mind."

Laughing and chatting gaily they strolled in groups across the driveway to the main building; then down the narrow cellar steps at the rear of the hall, and across the cellar to a dark passage.

"Here we are!" announced Miss Phillips, calling everyone to a halt. "Now get in single file."

Doris went first, with Roger Harris behind; then came Ruth, Jack Wilkinson, Marjorie, and Lily—all eager for the adventure. Forming a long chain with their right hands on the shoulders in front, they advanced cautiously. After the first few steps, the passage became lower, and pitch-black; they had to bend down and feel their way step by step as they went.

"Oh!" shrieked Doris, stopping suddenly. "Look! Ugh!"

Roger and Ruth, peering around her shoulder,

caught sight of a pair of gleaming eyes piercing through the darkness.

"It's a cat!" cried Roger, reassuringly. "But how in the world did you succeed in keeping it there?"

"I tied a chicken-bone to a stone," answered Miss Phillips. "And nothing will induce pussy to leave."

Frightened by the voices, the cat fled immediately, and the procession continued. In a minute or two, Doris caught sight of a ghost. But this time she was not really frightened.

"I know it's only a dummy!" she said. "I'm not afraid any more!"

But when the ghost actually began to stretch out its arms and move towards her, Doris admitted that she was scared, and clung, trembling, to Roger. For the hands of the ghost were the bony structures of a human skeleton, and its head was an empty skull!

"That's our lab skeleton, I'll bet!" exclaimed Roger. "But who's moving it?"

"I am!" laughed David Conner, throwing off his disguise.

With another yard, light was visible ahead, and the basement of the gymnasium came into view. Doris breathed a sigh of relief.

"It's nice to stand up straight again, isn't it?" remarked Marjorie, as the whole party reached the less cramped quarters. "But that was a great idea, Captain!"

"Wouldn't it make a jolly place to haze fresh-

men?" commented Ruth, who never grew tired of playing tricks.

"Refreshments are ready!" announced the Captain. "Look for your place-cards."

The basement was so cleverly camouflaged and the table so charmingly decorated that the effect could not have been better in the most elaborate dining hall. Corn-stalks, crepe-paper, candles, and favors worked wonders with the usually ugly room.

It seemed, too as if there were everything imaginable to eat—sandwiches, doughnuts, cider, apples, nuts, and candy—indeed, Marjorie regretted that she must eat carefully, for she was still in training.

Seated with David Conner next to her on one side and Dick Roberts on the other, she had not a single dull moment in which to regret the absence of John Hadley. All too soon the party came to an end.

"If only our good turns were as successful as our good times," remarked Marjorie, as she and Lily made their way to their room, "Pansy troop would be wonderful!"

"You're worrying about Frieda Hammer again," remonstrated Lily. "Do try to forget her!"

"I almost wish I could!" replied the other, with a sigh.

## CHAPTER XI

## THE HAUNTED HOUSE

IT WAS the first of November, the day when the reports were to be given out!

Marjorie had no fears for her own marks now, she knew that she would pass creditably. But she glanced sympathetically towards Alice Endicott, and Daisy Gravers, those freshmen who were so anxiously waiting for the deciding factor.

She recalled the parallel situation, early last spring, when she had awaited her own report with such trepidation. And then to have been disappointed—through Ruth's cruel dishonesty! She hoped with all her heart that there was no such disappointment in store for Alice.

Miss Allen's secretary read the list, and the girls came forward to receive their reports, stumbling back to their seats in their haste to examine them. Marjorie found herself calm when her own name was called, but actually trembling when Alice answered the summons.

Miss Phillips had promised to hike to a certain so-

called "haunted house" in the vicinity, taking a picnic supper,—in celebration of the new Scouts. The troop had agreed to meet for a moment at the rear of the assembly room to learn who these girls would be.

But Marjorie did not need to wait for the meeting to know the news from Alice. The girl's expression of bitter mortification told the story only too plainly! Marjorie dropped her eyes; she could not bear to see her cry.

And then an overwhelming feeling of remorse took possession of her. Perhaps it was her fault! Perhaps, if instead of wasting time and thoughts upon good-for-nothing Frieda Hammer, she had helped Alice in her studies, she might now be a Scout! And yet Marjorie was sincere enough with herself to know that she did not, even now, care so much about Alice or her success, as she did about Frieda. She realized, too, that although a week had gone by, she was still hoping that the runaway would return. Every day she went to the library to read the advertisements and personals in the newspapers in search of a clue. And every day, too, she read about the crimes, fearful lest she might discover Frieda's name, or a description of her, among the accounts.

Bringing her thoughts back with an effort to Alice Endicott and the Scouts she hurried over, at the dis-

missal of the assembly, to the place where the freshman was standing.

"What branch did you fail in, Alice?" she asked, in the most matter-of-fact tone she could assume. She knew that here in public was no place for sympathy.

"Chemistry!" answered Alice, with a brave effort to suppress a sob.

"Chemistry?" repeated Marjorie. "But I don't understand—I thought you made ninety-five in that test!"

"I did; but I cut three afternoon lab periods for hockey!"

Marjorie laughed in relief. "Why, child, you can easily make that up! In less than a week you'll be a Scout! Is everything else all right?"

"Apparently."

Immensely cheered by Marjorie's words and manner, Alice proclaimed herself ready to join the Girl Scouts at the other end of the room. Here they encountered wild hilarity. Everybody was congratulating the new girls. Mae VanHorn, Florence Evans, Daisy Gravers, and Barbara Hill had all made the required mark.

Alice, now quite calm and self-controlled, told her story, to which Marjorie added her own interpretation.

"But you'll miss the hike!" exclaimed Florence.

"Oh, are you going right away?" asked Alice, dolefully.

"This very afternoon!" replied Miss Phillips. "I'm sorry, Alice, but the arrangements are all made. Anyhow, we'll soon have another!"

The leaves were falling, and the air was quite sharp; the Scouts wore heavy sweaters and woolen caps to protect them from the cold.

"We'll look for nuts," said Miss Phillips. "Remember our lesson on edible plants?"

"Yes, indeed!" they all cried. "But you didn't tell us anything about nuts."

"We'll make it a game," answered the Captain. "Each girl who finds a new variety will get a point. Whoever has the greatest number of points by the time we reach the haunted house, wins!"

"How are we to know the haunted house, Captain?" asked Doris. "I've never seen it. Is there a story about it?"

"There is really no way of telling that the house is haunted, Doris; it looks like any other house, except that it is larger, and was once upon a time much finer than any of the other houses for miles around. I have seen it on a number of occasions, and I have heard the legend that is still told about it; but I've never been inside, so I'm rather curious to see what it's like. That's why I suggested that we have our suppers there."

"But does anyone live there?" asked Lily.

"No," replied Miss Phillips; "it has not been occupied for years and years—not since anybody around this locality can remember. Some of the uneducated people hereabouts still believe it is haunted, I understand; but it is rather unreasonable to suppose that any of the more cultured ones take any stock in the old story. While the fact that it was supposed to be haunted may have kept people from living in it a good many years ago, I think the real reason it is vacant nowadays is because it is so large that it would require a fortune to fix it up—it never seems to have had any care taken of it—and another fortune to keep it going after it had been made habitable. I believe it is still owned by the heirs of the original owner, who live in England, and that the estate is looked after by a firm in Philadelphia, which rents the ground to the farmers. Why, a few years ago, I passed by the house often, and after I had heard the legend, I determined to go inside, but I could never get up enough courage."

"Did you use to live around here, Captain?" asked Marjorie.

"That was when I was a student at Miss Allen's," answered Miss Phillips.

"A student at Miss Allen's?" echoed the girls, in surprise.

"I never knew that," said Marjorie. "You never told us before, Captain," she added reproachfully.

"Didn't I?" laughed their leader. "Well, I did go



to Miss Allen's; and I liked it so well that I did not want to leave; so when I finished college, I went back as teacher."

"No wonder you seem so much like one of us," remarked Marjorie.

"Do I?" said the other, rather flattered by the suggestion, in the girl's remark, of the place she held in their affections. "Perhaps that is because I feel like one of you."

"Captain, won't you tell us the story of the haunted house?" begged Doris, who, while she was the most timid girl among them, was always the most eager to hear about ghosts, as if she really enjoyed the creepy feeling that it gave her.

"Oh, it's too long to tell now, Doris. But I may tell you some other time; perhaps if I told you now, some of you would not want to visit the place."

"Captain! I've got a chestnut!" cried Ruth, holding up a small, familiar nut.

"Sure enough—there's the tree! Let's stop here a minute, and all get some."

Most of the girls succeeded in gathering a handful, before they started on. They proceeded at a leisurely pace, pausing now and then to hunt for nuts or to examine other objects of interest to the student of nature.

"Why, there are some birds, and they're not sparrows, either!" said Daisy Gravers, indicating several slate-colored birds about the size of English

sparrows. "I didn't know there were any other winter birds around here!"

"They are Juncos, or Snowbirds," explained the Captain. "They are a winter bird with us, and as soon as the warm weather comes they will fly north. Don't forget to put them down in your notebooks, girls."

They had now reached the outskirts of the woods, through which they had been walking for some time, and Miss Phillips called a halt and suggested that they count their nuts. Ruth, who had been the most diligent searcher, won the game, having found a greater number of varieties than any of the other girls. The Scout Captain told them something about each variety and the tree upon which it grew, before they continued their walk.

"Only a short distance along this road, and we reach the haunted house," said Miss Phillips.

The girls walked closer around her. They had emerged into open country, and were climbing a winding road which extended before them uphill; on their left the land descended gradually to a valley below them, where in the distance, they could see the scattered houses nestled among the fields of fertile farm-land.

"The nearest village is about a mile down the valley," the Captain informed them. "When the haunted house was built it was the farthest away

from the village, but since that time a number of others have sprung up all around here."

Mounting to the top of the hill, they found that the road, instead of dipping suddenly down again, was level; and that to the right of it there started a high stone wall which followed the irregularities of the road for a considerable distance. It was covered with lichen and moss, and showed gaps here and there where the mortar had crumbled away and the stones fallen in a heap upon the ground; while in other places, the tangled growth of ivy vines almost entirely obscured the stonework.

The Scouts kept to the road until they came to a break in the wall which formed the gateway. Wide open and sagging inward, two massive gates of iron grill-work had rusted and settled upon their hinges until they were firmly imbedded and immovable in the ground. The girls stopped and were examining the intricacy and beauty of the design in the wrought iron-work, when an old woman came hobbling along the road towards them. Doris shivered; in fact, all of the girls trembled in spite of themselves: for the creature, thin, tattered, and old, reminded them of a ghost herself.

"I wouldn't go in there, if I was you girls," she warned them, holding up her bony hand. "There was a strange-lookin' figer there last week or so! Nobody seen her come, and nobody seen her go—only once or twice some of us that lives near-by saw

her through the winder. Some said she were a human, out of her mind, some says she were a spirit—only but for the boat she brung with her, and went away in again!"

"The boat!" repeated Marjorie, breathlessly. "Was it a canoe?"

But the old woman shook her head; she did not know any distinction among varieties of boats.

"She must 'a come by the stream at the back of the house, and vanished the same way," muttered the stranger; "but whoever she was, she wan't no good! What with her, and the old ghost that some says shrieks around the house o' nights, nobody'd get me inside! I wish you wouldn't go in!"

"Oh, nothing will hurt us," said Miss Phillips, gently. "We want some place that is protected from the wind where we can eat our supper."

"It was Frieda! I know it was Frieda!" cried Marjorie, after the old woman had left them.

"Well, what if it was?" remarked Ruth. "You'll never see your canoe again, so there's no use of your getting so excited."

"Probably not," assented Marjorie, making a desperate effort to calm herself. For Ruth could never understand what the thing meant to her. Nevertheless, she was encouraged to have this much information about the girl.

Close together, and keyed up with excitement, they advanced eagerly along the lane leading to the

house, which they could see about a hundred yards away, gray-white through the grove of tall trees which surrounded it. And as they drew nearer their agitation seemed to become intensified, as if they were about to discover—they knew not what!

The house itself was a perfect example of old Colonial mansion, with its wide, hospitable doorway before which tall columns supported a balcony. Its exterior, despite the appearance of age and decay that was everywhere apparent, was still impressive by reason of its great beauty of design.

Standing among the rank weeds which grew waist high about the place, they gazed in awe at the walls which once were white, but now were streaked and weather stained; at the windows, whose broken panes admitted the rain or the sunshine, and from which the shutters were sagging or had fallen completely away; at the shingles of the roof, violet-toned and curling up; and at the nests the birds had built in the chimneys and eaves.

As Miss Phillips stepped upon the low porch, the rotting boards bent beneath her weight. Trying the knob of the massive door, she found it locked.

"I guess we'll have to get in some other way," she said. "Let's walk around and investigate."

They followed her around to the back, where through the trees they caught sight of the glistening water of the stream. But here also the doors were locked, and not wishing to effect an entrance through

a window if a door were available, they passed around to the left wing. Here they mounted the broad piazza, and Ruth turned the knob of the door, which opened. She entered boldly, while the rest of the girls followed more cautiously behind her. They were in a large room, well lighted by its many windows. A damp, musty odor pervaded the place.

"This was evidently the conservatory," remarked the Captain. "Let's look farther."

They explored room after room, holding their breath as they entered each one, as if they were about to discover something strange and terrifying there. But there was nothing but dust and cobwebs to greet their eyes. They went about opening doors, investigating bedrooms, peering into closets; but they could find nothing interesting or exciting—not the slightest vestige of a ghost.

"I guess this ghost only walks at night," said Lily,—"or at certain seasons of the year."

"It certainly looks that way, doesn't it?" agreed Doris, grown quite brave.

Up to this time, not one girl had actually admitted to herself that she did not expect to find a ghost; and none could tell from the Captain's expression what she thought of it; but now they were positive that they did not believe in ghosts—the idea was too preposterous—especially when Lily, upon opening a closet-door, exposed an old wig-form

which lay on the shelf, and which caused them great amusement.

"I dare say the people who lived here wore artificial wigs, both men and women," commented Miss Phillips; "it was about that period."

If there ever was a ghost, it was one which left no traces; and the girls became more at ease in this atmosphere of emptiness. They did, however, have one brief moment of panic. They had all climbed the stairs to the third floor and had paused upon the landing, undecided as to which way they should go first, when a sharp whirring or rustling was heard in the room nearest them.

For an instant they all stood perfectly still, paralyzed by fright. Then Miss Phillips, with a quick step forward, flung open the door. This act started the rustling again; and through the open doorway they could see that it was nothing but a swallow which had in some way become imprisoned there. Marjorie caught it in her hand, where it lay palpitating distressedly; and thrusting her arm through a broken pane of glass, allowed the creature to escape.

The short autumn day was drawing to a close, and the chillness of the damp, musty atmosphere was beginning to affect the girls unpleasantly. The sight of another fire-place—there seemed to be one in every room—recalled Miss Phillips's thoughts to practical things.

"Let's go down to that big room," she suggested, "and prepare our supper."

In fifteen minutes a bright fire was going and the kettle boiling cheerily. The girls were so busy hurrying to and fro in preparation of the meal that they had forgotten the ghost.

It was only after they were seated on the floor, and had time to look around, that Marjorie recalled the situation to their minds by remarking,

"Can you imagine Frieda Hammer staying here all night long by herself?"

The girls shuddered at the suggestion.

"Wouldn't it be great if we could trace her?" said Edith, after a moment's silence. "I hate to think of her all alone—with no protection."

"Yes," answered Miss Phillips, "though I haven't said much about the matter, the girl has been constantly in my mind. And I wanted to tell you that I have written to a friend of mine, a woman who is a private detective, and asked her to look into the matter. She would, of course, make nothing public, but would only try to bring Frieda back here, or send her home.

"But I have been thinking that perhaps some of you girls might have a plan, so I am going to offer a medal of merit to any Scout who locates her. During Thanksgiving—well, I will leave it to you! But we simply must find Frieda!"

The fire had died down to the coals, and the girls



grew silent as they gazed dreamily at the pictures their imaginations invented. It was Doris who spoke first.

"Now is a good time for the story, Captain. Please tell us!" she pleaded.

Miss Phillips hesitated, glancing keenly at the eager faces of the girls around her, who now seemed perfectly calm and self-possessed. Then she looked at her watch; it was not quite six o'clock. There would still be time; but she hesitated to tell a ghost-story in the same house—in the very room!—where the ghost was supposed to appear. It was the girls' own tranquil manner that decided her.

"When I was a freshman at Miss Allen's," she began, "I roomed with a sophomore whose home was not far from here. Several times I went with her to spend week-ends with her parents. On one of these occasions, after we had finished dinner and were comfortably seated around the open fire, her grandfather—a very old man with snow-white hair—was talking of his boyhood in this neighborhood. Even then this house was believed haunted, but the story was better known than it is now, when there are few living who could tell the details. It was my good fortune to hear it from his own lips, just as his grandfather had told him.

"His grandfather, he said, was a frequent guest here in the old days. The man who built this house came over from England, it was said, to escape scan-

dal. Very wealthy, handsome, and of noble birth, to all appearances he was a gentleman, having a very gracious way about him; but in reality he was wayward, headstrong, and dissipated. He entertained lavishly, and his parties were the talk of the countryside—especially the dress-ball which he gave every New Year's Eve, starting at midnight and continuing throughout the next day and night. It was after one of these New Year's parties, which was particularly riotous, that he disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. Friends who called at the house several days after the event found that the servants and the furniture had vanished, no one knew whither, and the house completely empty. Naturally, this gave rise to much speculation on the part of the townsfolk, who invented many stories; some said that he had repented of his evil ways and fled into retirement; others that the devil had carried him off for a companion in wickedness.

“Meanwhile, the house remained deserted, and decay set in. It was not until the following New Year's Eve that it was seen occupied again; then, two men who were returning late from a revel took a short-cut through the garden in front of the house. The moon, flooding the house with a pale light, showed shadows passing and repassing before the windows of the reception hall. The watchers clutched at each other in sudden fear.

“‘This is the anniversary!’ said one, in a hoarse

whisper; and they went home to talk it over.

“They agreed to say nothing about it; but when the next night still another saw the same occurrence, they made the story known. That was the beginning of the ghost legend. And while the place continued deserted and silent at all other times, year after year on the anniversary of the great ball, some late reveler was sure to report tales of strange doings there. It formed a fine topic of discussion on a winter evening at the inn, when the wind outside howled about the four corners.

“Now there were those who believed in these old wives’ tales, and those who did not; and numbered among the scoffers was one Simon Somebody-or-other, whom the village folk called Simple Simon, partly because of his foolish appearance, and partly because of his great love for pies. Simon was the village fiddler—in fact, he had never been known to do anything else—and was in great demand at all the feasts and dances about the countryside. His awkward, angular form was a familiar sight at all such festivities, where he could be found in a corner by himself, out of the way, his head cocked to one side, eyes gazing up at the ceiling, and an idiotic smile on his face, fiddling as if his life depended on it. If the dancers had been as tireless as Simon, they would never have stopped to rest, for he ran on from one tune to another without the slightest intermission; indeed, the only times he paused at all would come

right in the middle of the piece, and the dancers would wait, stranded in the center of the floor, while he raised the mug of ale which always stood well filled at his elbow; for they never allowed him to go thirsty. This eccentricity they overlooked, because Simon was himself so obliging.

"One night in the inn-parlor, three gossips, heads together and elbows on the table, were discussing the haunted house. Simon joined them, scoffing as usual.

"'I tell you what I'll do,' said one. 'You sleep the night there, this coming New Year's Eve, and I'll buy you a keg of the best ale in this cellar!'

"Simon could only gasp at this proposal; but the magnificence of the reward was too much for him. 'Done!' he cried; and without considering the consequences, agreed to pass a night among the ghosts. The only requirement was that he should go to the house before midnight, and remain there until sunrise.

"The weeks passed, and the wager was apparently forgotten; at least, Simon hoped that it was, for he had repented his rashness. But it was not forgotten; when the time drew near, he was reminded of it, and became more apprehensive. Were those stories true? He doubted. Only at night, as he lay in bed sleepless, he felt a peculiar sinking sensation within him. It was noticed that he became pale and worn, was quieter than usual, and played more out

of tune; and he even seemed to be losing his appetite for pies.

“But none of these things let him off; and when the fateful evening came, Simon, with his beloved fiddle tucked beneath his arm for companionship, and a lantern, appeared at the inn. They wished him good luck and pleasant dreams, doubting nevertheless that he would have either; and the landlord, a kindly soul, slipped a cold snack and a jug of his best ale into his hand.

“Outside he paused to look back upon the cheery comfort of the inn-parlor. Well, there was nothing now but to go ahead with it, he reflected; and with a heavy heart, he turned his steps in the direction of the haunted house.

“Though the moon had not yet risen, there was sufficient light from the stars for him to see his way. It was strange, he thought, how familiar objects which he had never particularly noted before, now had a friendly look, with the whiteness of the frost upon them. Simon walked fast, as if to keep up both his circulation and his courage, and his step sounded crisply upon the hard dirt road.

“When he was abreast of the house, he hesitated. The moon, mounting above the treetops, was shining upon the windows. There was no sound, no movement, from within. Breathless, he entered. His own footsteps echoed and re-echoed about the bare, vault-like hall, emphasizing its emptiness. He closed

the door behind him, made a light in his lantern, and whistling loudly to keep up his courage, entered the living-hall. The air was damp and chilly; his breath came like smoke from his nostrils. Setting his lantern upon the floor, he crossed to the fireplace and tossed in fagots and logs from the supply which was still there. The merry crackle of the burning logs, and the warmth and light of the fire cheered him somewhat; and he attacked the jug and the meat-pie provided by the thoughtful landlord. Revived by the food, he lit his pipe, and taking up his violin, commenced to play. He went over all the tunes he knew, played them in different keys and with variations, to while away the evening; and every time he felt his courage deserting him he turned to his jug for moral support. As you can guess, he did this pretty frequently until, just as he was draining the last drop, he heard a door bang somewhere upstairs, and a rustling in the hall above him. Almost afraid to breathe, he sat there waiting for a recurrence of the sound. Everything was perfectly still except the burning logs in the fireplace. After a while Simon began to fancy that he had not really heard anything, but that his overwrought nerves were playing a trick upon him; so he rose, tiptoed across the room and stood back in the shadows of the great curving stairway, listening. Again he heard sounds above him, more rustling, and footsteps this time. A chill passed over him

and the blood froze in his veins; at every fresh noise he felt as if a million pins were pricking his scalp. But nothing happened, and when the sounds had apparently ceased, he waited where he was, leaning against the stairway, so paralyzed with fear that he could not move from the spot.

“He remained thus, listening, while the evening wore away. In spite of his fear Simon became drowsy. The wind outside had risen, and was rattling the shutters and roaring in the chimney, causing the fire to brighten and burst into a feeble flame. Then a wonderful thing happened! The great hall suddenly became ablaze with the light of hundreds of candles. In wonder Simon raised his head and saw a stately procession of men and women, fully fifty couples, arm-in-arm descending the stairs. They wore beautiful clothing—not a bit like the people in the village—but such as Simon had never seen before, except in pictures. He who was apparently the host strode over to the fire and kicked the logs into a blaze, while others gathered about it to warm their hands. Simon thought the scene a grand sight, with their lace ruffles, knee-breeches, wigs, and buckled shoes; and he was lost in admiration of the women, with their powdered hair and white shoulders, their jewels, and their bright eyes which shone so coquettishly above their fans. If these were ghosts, he reflected, they were very gallant ones, and good to look at; he was beginning to

be glad he had come when the host suddenly clapped his hands together, and looking his way, ordered the music to begin. There seemed nothing out of the way in all this to Simon as he tucked his fiddle beneath his chin, and drawing the bow across the strings, commenced playing a waltz. Partners were chosen, and the dancing began. Simon, as usual, went from one tune to another, but these people never tired; all night long the dancing continued; and when Simon, weary and thirsty, paused from habit to reach for the mug of ale which was not at his elbow, the host glared at him so furiously that he went on playing more frantically than ever. Faster and faster the mad phantoms danced, swirling around and around the room; faster and faster he fiddled, till his arm ached and his back felt broken; and just as the revel had reached the highest pitch and the fiddle was squeaking its loudest, the stairway against which he was leaning seemed to give way, and Simon fell with a crash. Dazed and bruised from the fall, he sat up; the phantoms had vanished, the lantern was out, and the fire had burned down and was casting flickering shadows about the walls. In growing horror, Simon ran screaming from the house, and down the road to the inn as fast as his legs could carry him. He burst in upon them, his fiddle clutched tightly in one hand, the picture of terror.

“Of course, his story was greeted with knowing



looks and sly winks behind his back; and he told it to all who would listen. He continued to fiddle about the village as he had done before, but he was never quite the same after that adventure; the haunted house seemed to have a fascination for him, and it was noticed that he hung about it frequently, though he never entered. And when he announced his intention of spending the next New Year's Eve with the phantoms, the people knew he was crazy and urged him not to do so. But he could not resist; early in the evening of that last day of the year, he was seen making his way towards the haunted house, his fiddle beneath his arm.

“He never came back!”

## CHAPTER XII

## THE DINNER-DANCE

"AND I thought all along that Miss Phillips didn't care!"

Marjorie made the remark softly, almost as if she were talking to herself instead of to Lily, as the girls sat together in their room crocheting after supper. All the Scouts had pledged the hour of seven to eight in the evening, unless something unusual was going on, to work for the bazaar.

"Didn't care about what?" asked Lily. "Men?"

Marjorie laughed. "No, not that. I mean about Frieda's being lost."

"Yes, I thought it was funny, too, though, of course, I didn't expect her to throw up her job and go on an aimless sort of journey to find her. Miss Phillips has too much good sense for anything wild like that."

"She has done the wisest thing possible by using that private detective," continued Marjorie; "but somehow, Lil, I don't think she'll ever find her. I think it's sort of up to us."

"But how?"

"That I don't know, except to keep our eyes open."

"Oh, Marj!" exclaimed Lily, interrupting her, and changing the subject. "Do you 'spose the mail's been sorted? It was late to-night, you know."

"What makes you so anxious?" teased Marjorie. "Hearing from Dick Roberts?"

"Now Marj—don't be silly!"

"But you are expecting something?"

Lily toyed with her crochet needle, pulling out a long loop of the wool and holding it over her finger. The baby's sweater that she was making was almost finished.

"Guess I will run down to the office," she said, putting her work upon the table; "I'll be right back."

By the time she returned Marjorie had forgotten all about the mail; her thoughts were again with Frieda, imagining all sorts of horrors for the ignorant, unresourceful girl, in some strange place.

"Three letters!" cried Lily, triumphantly. "I didn't open mine either; I waited for you!"

Marjorie's eyes brightened; mail was always welcome.

"You have to guess the post-mark, or who it's from!" teased Lily, holding her hand over the letter. ,

"Princeton?" asked Marjorie, bending over her crochet to hide a blush.

"Nope!"

Lily tossed the missile into the other girl's lap, for she was too eager to open her own two letters to cause any further delay. She and Marjorie had each received square, khaki-colored envelopes, with the well-known fleur-de-lis on the flap. They were from the Boy Scouts.

"A dance!" cried Marjorie, jumping up in glee, and dropping her crochet upon the floor. "In honor of the hockey team!"

"Isn't it great, Marj? Who's inviting you?"

"David Conner! Who's your partner?"

"Dick!"

"Of course he is! I needn't have asked."

"John Hadley had better look out," remarked Lily; "or somebody else will have his girl."

"I'm not anybody's girl!" protested Marjorie, indignantly. And then, demurely—"Only father's!"

"A dinner-dance!" repeated Lily, reading her invitation for the third time. "Marj, have you ever been to one?"

"Never!"

"How do you suppose they got Miss Allen's permission?"

"Oh, Miss Phillips saw to that! She can get anything she wants!" returned Marjorie.

"I hope we beat Miss Martin's team, or we'll feel rather blue. And think of so much in one day—a hockey game with them, and a dinner and a dance

with the Boy Scouts! And all the day before we go home for Thanksgiving!"

"Who's your other letter from, Lil?" asked Marjorie, noticing the envelope unopened on the table.

"Oh, I forgot! And I ought to be ashamed. It's from mama."

She read a few lines and her face lighted up happily. "Marj," she said, looking up shyly, "mama and papa want you to spend the Thanksgiving holidays with us. Can you? Oh, please——"

Marjorie threw her arms about Lily, squeezing her for joy.

"I'd love to! I've never been in New York. Oh, if father and mother will only let me!"

"We'll go to the theater, and ride on the bus—and maybe invite John and Dick there for dinner—and—and——!"

Marjorie let go of her room-mate, and went over to her desk. "I'm going to write home this very minute," she announced, and seated herself to begin the task.

The Boy Scouts had included thirteen girls of the hockey squad in their invitation, and Miss Phillips, of course. Twelve of these girls were Girl Scouts; Alice Endicott, who had not yet made up her chemistry laboratory work, was still outside of Pansy troop.

The hockey game, the dinner-dance, and the holiday preparations made the very air seem to tingle

with excitement and anticipation. When the day came, Marjorie made no attempt to reserve her energy for the later events; she sang and danced about all morning with happiness. This year she was well prepared to meet Miss Martin's team, not only individually, for she was in good practice and excellent physical trim herself, but as captain of her own team, she felt confident of her players.

The girls were out on the field early, practicing "passes," and warming up for the game. Everyone on the team expected to play; but Helen Stewart and Barbara Hill, besides one or two other moderately good players, came in readiness to substitute should they be needed.

As the team from Miss Martin's approached the field, the critical observer could mark the difference between these girls and those from the home team. Long hikes, sensible clothing and food, and two weeks at the Scout camp with exposure to all kinds of weather, had hardened Miss Allen's girls and added something almost boyish to their bearing. And in Marjorie they had an excellent captain, resourceful and confident of success, whose calm assurance inspired them.

From the opening stroke when Marjorie, the center forward, sent the ball at one bound across the field to her left forward, who dodged the opposing half-back, the game seemed almost a walk-over for Miss Allen's girls. Only once did Miss Martin's

side make a goal, and then Lily Andrews took all the blame for it upon herself.

"I thought it was too easy," she afterward explained to Marjorie, "and I didn't work hard enough. It served me right, but I'm sorry for the team."

At the end of the first half, with the score six to two in their favor, Miss Phillips decided to give both the regular substitutes a chance. But instead of making it easier for the opponents, it became more difficult, for Helen Stewart had always been a good player, and Barbara Hill, who had successful streaks, seemed to be particularly lucky. It was an easy victory for Miss Allen's girls; the final score was fourteen to two.

"This decides me!" exclaimed Miss Martin, after she had congratulated Miss Phillips and her team. "Now I am convinced of the value of a Girl Scout troop."

"If you'd see our reports, you'd be still more convinced," remarked Miss Allen, coming up behind her, and overhearing the remark.

"When can you come over and demonstrate?" pursued the visitor, turning again to the gym teacher.

"Better wait till after Christmas, hadn't we?" suggested Miss Phillips. "Does that suit you?"

"Perfectly," replied the other.

Marjorie and Lily lingered only long enough to

avoid being rude to their guests, and then hurried off to their room to prepare for the party.

"Isn't it fun to be able to wear something besides the Scout uniform?" remarked Lily, as she removed the muslin with which her pink canton-crêpe was covered. "I don't believe the Boy Scouts have ever seen me in anything else! And I'm going to curl my hair."

Marjorie smiled; Lily certainly did look better in pretty dresses, for she was not the type of girl who could wear a uniform to advantage.

They dressed leisurely, and by half-past five were ready to go over to the gymnasium, where they were to meet the other girls. They arrived early, but Ruth and Mae and several others were already there.

"It doesn't seem like an athletic event," remarked Ruth, glancing at the dainty dresses of the girls. "It seems more like a musical comedy."

"And that reminds me," said Miss Phillips, who had just come in, charming in a gray georgette with a lavender girdle, and wearing a bouquet of violets, "that reminds me that I would like the Scouts to give a sort of musical comedy in the spring."

"Great!" cried Ruth. She had a passably good voice, and she knew it—also, she knew that Marjorie could scarcely carry a tune.

By this time everyone had arrived, and they all started for the tea-room in the village which the boys had obtained for the occasion. Marjorie was



curious to know who gave Miss Phillips her violets, but not daring to tease her, she tried to content herself by whispering about it to Lily.

If the girls, in their pretty party dresses, made a sensation with the boys, the latter, in their turn, appeared very different in their neat, dark suits to the girls, who were so accustomed to seeing them in their official uniforms. There were only thirteen boys present, who had been chosen according to their standing, and Mr. Remington, the Scoutmaster.

The girls descended the stairs, after leaving their wraps in the dressing room, and each boy sought his own particular partner to escort her to the dining-room. Two long tables, each seating fourteen persons, were beautifully decorated with yellow crêpe-paper, favors, and large bunches of chrysanthemums in the center. The lights, too, were covered with yellow paper.

"It's lovely!" cried Marjorie with delight. "And hockey season's over, so we can just eat and eat!"

It was a typical Thanksgiving dinner, with turkey and brown gravy, and cranberry sauce. There was only a simple salad but everybody was expected to eat both mince pie and ice-cream, and to finish with nuts, raisins and candy.

"I'll never be able to dance a step," sighed Lily at the conclusion of the feast, as she languidly stirred her coffee.

"We're not going to, for a while," answered David. "For we have other entertainment."

"What?" asked Ruth, overhearing the conversation, and always eager for novelty.

"A fortune teller!" he replied. "She is going to tell all the girls' fortunes!"

Marjorie clapped her hands. "What fun! Nothing could possibly be nicer," she said, happily.

"And will she answer questions?" asked Lily.

"One question for each girl!" said Dick.

"I know what mine will be!" declared Marjorie, without the least hesitation.

"Does Princeton miss me?" teased Ruth.

"Wrong again, Ruth," said Marjorie, shaking her head.

The fortune teller, a real gypsy, arrived in a few moments, and the party adjourned to the dance room to listen. Sitting down upon the floor near the fireplace, she produced a soiled pack of cards; then, addressing the girls one by one, she painted glorious futures for them, with ocean trips, "dark" or "blond" men, letters, and inheritances. It was all good fun, and most of the girls did not take her seriously. Their favorite question was, of course, "Will I get married?" to which the woman invariably answered "Yes"—or, sometimes, "Twice!"

But Marjorie's question was a little different.

"Where is Frieda Hammer?" She asked it seriously, trembling in spite of herself.

The fortune teller half closed her eyes, and there was intense silence for a moment. Then she replied slowly,

“New York!”

“Oh, thank you!” cried Marjorie, believing in spite of her better judgment. “And we’ll find her, Lil!” she added, glancing significantly at her room-mate.

Around nine o’clock the dancing began. David Conner had naturally arranged Marjorie’s program to give himself the first dance.

“Did you know Jack invited me home with him for Thanksgiving?” he asked, watching her closely, hoping to see an expression of pleasure cross her face.

But her eyes did not change.

“That’s nice,” she replied. “I’m sorry I won’t be there—I’ve accepted an invitation to go home with my room-mate.”

David looked disappointed. Did Marjorie still care for John Hadley, to the exclusion of all other boys? He could not help wondering about it, and, somehow, felt vaguely jealous.

The hour and a half of dancing passed all too quickly, and the girls were summoned by Miss Phillips to get their wraps. As the boys joined them to accompany them back to school, David sought Marjorie, hoping to have her to himself. But he did not find her conversation very satisfactory, for her mind

seemed far away, and he was relieved to have Lily and Dick join them.

Marjorie had enjoyed her evening, but now she was eager to be alone with Lily, to discuss, in private, what the fortune teller had said about Frieda's whereabouts.

"And I really can't help attaching some importance to what she said," she remarked, when the girls were finally alone. "Oh, Lil," she added, "just suppose we should find her! This very week, perhaps!"

"But New York's a big place, Marj!" observed Lily, rubbing her eyes, sleepily. "So don't get your hopes too high!"

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE THANKSGIVING HOLIDAYS

SEVEN o'clock came all too soon for Marjorie and Lily, as they opened their eyes at the sound of the rising bell.

"Don't you wish we could stay in bed?" yawned Marjorie, glancing at the clock.

"We can to-morrow; mama will let us have breakfast in bed every single morning, if we like."

"Oh, Lil, that sounds too good to be true! I know we'll have a wonderful time."

There were only three hours of classes; after an early luncheon, school was dismissed. Everybody took the one-o'clock train for home.

"Frieda saved me the trouble of expressing my canoe home," remarked Marjorie, when the girls were comfortably seated together in the train. "But how I wish I'd find it—and her, too!"

"Maybe we shall," said Lily. "Don't forget the fortune teller!"

"But New York's pretty big, isn't it?" Having

lived all of her life in a small town, Marjorie had only a vague idea of the size of the great city.

Lily laughed good-naturedly. "Wait till you see it," she said. "It's simply tremendous—and so crowded and confusing."

"Poor Frieda!" sighed Marjorie.

Mrs. Andrews's chauffeur met the train, bringing the former's regrets at not being present in person.

"Mama's out so much," explained Lily. "Teas and charity work, you know."

As Marjorie entered the big limousine, she realized that she had never ridden in so luxurious a car before. She glanced at the soft upholstery, the bouquet of real flowers, and felt the warmth of the artificial heat. Lily's parents were obviously rich, although the girl evidently gave it little thought now. But Marjorie remembered how impressed her roommate had been with the fact when she entered Miss Allen's, and suddenly she decided that, had she known all this, she would not have blamed her so severely.

Then the streets claimed her attention. They were filled with traffic of all kinds, which she watched silently. Her thoughts flew to Frieda Hammer; she wondered what were her impressions as she entered this great, noisy confusion, that is called New York. How would she feel herself, if she had come all alone—with no Lily to direct her, no car to meet her, no friends to entertain her? Alone, with

little or no money in her purse, and no qualifications to fit her for work! She shuddered at the very idea; a sort of despair seized her, so that for the instant she suffered vicariously as acutely as if she were the other girl in the situation.

But Lily's voice brought her back to reality.

"That was the Grand Central Station, where we came in," explained the New York girl. "And this is Sixth Avenue."

"And you live in an apartment, too, don't you, Lil?" asked Marjorie, her gaze resting upon her companion. "Do you know, I've never been in an apartment!"

"It's an apartment-hotel," corrected Lily. "We don't even get our own meals!"

Half an hour later, the girls were sitting in Lily's dainty boudoir, sipping chocolate and enjoying a glorious hour of pure idleness.

"Are we doing anything to-night, Lil?" asked Marjorie, leaning back contentedly against the cushions on the window seat. "Not that I think we need to——" she hastened to add, lest her hostess might attribute her remark to impoliteness.

"Yes, we're going to the theater," replied Lily, laughingly. "It's a musical comedy. I hope you will like it."

"I'm sure I will. Do you know, Lil, I've never been in a real theater in my life!" She paused a moment, and then blurted out, unexpectedly, "Sup-

pose Frieda should be a chorus girl! Do you think we'd recognize her, with all her paint and powder, if she were?"

Lily smiled at the other's simplicity. Evidently Marjorie had no conception of the great number of theaters in New York, or of the difficulty, for a novice, in obtaining a part in a show. And the idea of Frieda Hammer—rude, awkward, and uncouth—on the stage, was absolutely grotesque.

"I hardly think she'd be able to get the job, Marj," she replied, succeeding in hiding her amusement. But in order to forestall any more such remarks, she decided to change the subject.

"We're going to the game to-morrow," she announced, "with papa and mama, and——"

But Marjorie was only politely enthusiastic.

"We surely won't see Frieda there," she remarked. "Isn't it dreadfully expensive?"

"Not only that, but she wouldn't be interested. Of course, Frieda Hammer wouldn't understand football! But I'll tell you who will be there!"

"Who?"

"Guess!"

"The boys?"

"Yes; John Hadley and Dick Roberts!"

"Oh, I'm awfully glad!" exclaimed Marjorie. "I haven't seen John for ages."

And in the conversation that followed, the Girl Scouts' runaway ward was forgotten.



Thanksgiving day was bright and clear, and just cold enough to give a bracing tingle to the air. The boys arrived only a few minutes before the time to start for the game, and among so many people, Marjorie and John exchanged only the most formal greetings.

During the automobile ride, and later at the game, it seemed to Marjorie that John was unusually quiet. Perhaps, she decided, it was because he was with strangers,—or perhaps it was because he had changed. She knew that he was working his way through college, and she wondered whether the responsibility was weighing him down. Or perhaps, she thought, he was no longer interested in so youthful a person as herself.

But to John Hadley, Marjorie Wilkinson was the same merry, charming girl who continued to hold first place in his affections.

Mrs. Andrews invited the boys to dinner after the game, and they accepted gladly. It was not until after the meal was over, and Marjorie and John were dancing in the hotel ball-room that the girl lost her shyness and felt herself back again on the old familiar ground with him.

“May I come to see you at Christmas time?” he whispered, as they glided across the floor.

“But I’m not sure that I’ll be home,” replied Marjorie, thinking of Frieda Hammer, and wondering

whether she might not try to trace her again at that time, if she failed now.

"Are you going far away?" he pursued, in a woe-ful tone.

"I don't know. But you can write!"

The young people danced until the first intermission, when Mrs. Andrews rose to go, and the girls, after saying good-bye to the boys, accompanied her to the apartment.

"I looked at every waitress in the dining-room," said Marjorie, when she and Lily were alone in their room, "and I tried to see all the people I could on the streets to-day, but none of them looked like Frieda!"

"Oh, Marj! You're hopeless!" replied Lily, in exasperation. "Here I expected you to rave about John Hadley, or at least the football game, and the very minute he's gone, you begin on that girl again!"

"Do I bore you, Lil? Or do I seem unappreciative?" asked Marjorie, penitently.

"No, you old dear!" laughed Lily, relenting. "By the way, what is it you want to do to-morrow?"

"Go shopping!" replied Marjorie happily, for the idea of the novel experience was pleasing to her.

Mrs. Wilkinson had given her daughter some money with which to go shopping, and the girls planned their trip for Friday. Mrs. Andrews decided to send the chauffeur with them, allowing them to go otherwise unaccompanied, for she knew how

much pleasure it would afford them to go alone.

Early after lunch the following day, the girls started on their expedition. After they left the car and entered the shops, Marjorie wanted to proceed slowly, stopping everywhere to look at displays and to examine the beautiful things spread alluringly before their eyes. She really bought little; the experience was so new to her that she could scarcely make up her mind what to choose.

At quarter after four Lily looked at her watch.

"I'm dead, Marj!" she announced. "Let's go and get some hot chocolate, and then go home."

"All right," agreed Marjorie reluctantly. "But I sort of hate to leave. By the way, Lil, have you been noticing the salesgirls?"

"Not 'specially. Why?"

"I thought one of them might be Frieda."

"If you mention Frieda Hammer again," threatened Lily, "when I get back to school, I'll go poison that fortune teller for getting you so worked up."

"Oh, please don't, Lil!" begged Marjorie, good-naturedly.

She followed her hostess out of the brilliantly lighted department store, across the street, and into a cozy, softly lighted tea-room. The contrast between the glaring, noisy shops and this quiet, restful retreat worked wonders with the tired girls. They seemed almost immediately to imbibe the peaceful atmosphere, and to become refreshed.

"It's lovely!" exclaimed Marjorie, refusing even to look at the menu. "Anything you order will suit me."

Although Marjorie had decided not to plague Lily again with the mention of Frieda, she had by no means forgotten her. Accordingly, she followed the proceeding she had adopted upon every occasion since she had entered New York; she looked carefully at every young girl she saw, hoping that it might prove to be Frieda.

As soon as her eyes became accustomed to the dim light, she peered eagerly,—almost rudely, she was afraid—into the faces of the waitresses. Suddenly, her heart stood still; at the far corner, near the swinging door leading to the kitchen, stood a girl bearing a striking resemblance to Frieda! Could Marjorie be dreaming—or was it possible that the runaway had a double? She dared not trust her own eyes.

"Look, Lil!" she whispered. "Could that be Frieda, there?"

Lily followed the direction indicated by Marjorie, and saw a slim girl in black, wearing a waitress's cap and apron. The girl was neat, and her hair was tidy; indeed, one would have to stretch the imagination to picture her as the one of the troop's adoption. And yet her features—and something about her bearing were decidedly like Frieda.

"Oh, Frieda Hammer would never get a job in a

place like this," remarked Lily, discouragingly. "They only employ refined girls here!"

Still not daunted, however, Marjorie half rose from her seat, but just at that moment the waitress in question disappeared with a tray of dishes.

Lily gave her order for hot chocolate with whipped cream, and fancy cakes, to the waitress who stood at their table. "Does that suit you, Marj?" she inquired.

"Yes, thanks!" replied Marjorie; but at that moment she would have agreed to corned-beef and cabbage. She watched eagerly for the girl to reappear; finally she was rewarded by seeing the two waitresses enter together.

As her own girl came towards them, she leaned over and asked earnestly,

"Can you tell me the name of the waitress—over there?"

"Jennie Perkins," replied the girl, quietly.

Marjorie's face fell; she must be mistaken. Then an idea came to her; perhaps it was Frieda, under an assumed name!

"Has she worked here long?" pursued Marjorie.

"I think so—but I've only been here a week myself, and she was here when I came!"

The girl had disappeared again, and Marjorie turned reluctantly to her refreshment. She kept watching the swinging door, hoping that the girl would reappear and give her an opportunity to ques-

tion her. But she did not return before Marjorie and Lily had finished their chocolate, so they were obliged to leave the shop, as much in the dark as ever.

The remaining two days passed without further adventure, and on Sunday evening they were back again at Miss Allen's.

"I wonder whether the fortune teller was mistaken, after all?" thought Marjorie.

## CHAPTER XIV

## THE CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Two weeks had passed by, and the swimming team had been chosen during that time. Four more girls, in addition to Alice Endicott, who was now a Scout, were eligible for Pansy troop and were to be admitted that evening. Three of them were freshmen: Dorothy Whitcomb, Gladys Staley, and Mildred Cavin. And the fourth girl was Evelyn Hopkins.

Miss Phillips called the meeting to order, and then hastened through the opening ceremony and necessary routine.

"There is much to do and to talk about," she said, after the preliminary matters had been settled, "that I feel as if I can't talk fast enough. But I think we shall consider the regular Scout business first.

"First of all, I wish to welcome the new girls with the sincere hope that they will soon pass their Tenderfoot test and be registered as regular members of Pansy Troop. If they all do, we shall then have twenty-four girls, or three patrols.

“Accordingly, after the first of the year we shall re-divide into three patrols, and the three Scouts with the highest standing—counting the number of merit-badges, etc.—will be the three patrol leaders, and may choose, in turn, the members of their respective patrols.

“Next, after the New Year, the second-class girls will study for their first-class test; for during spring vacation I am going to take the first eight girls who pass this test successfully, to Washington. The expenses are to be provided by a wealthy friend of the troop!”

“Who?” they all shouted, curious. “Oh, it is too wonderful!”

But Miss Phillips refused to reveal the name of their unknown benefactor.

“Now, about our Good Turn. Of course, tomorrow is the day of the bazaar, about which we shall go into detail later; but now I want to discuss what we shall do with the money. I have a report from Miss Smith, the private detective.”

At these words, Marjorie leaped to her feet. Forgetful of the formality of the occasion, she asked, excitedly,

“Did she find Frieda?”

“Yes; but she lost her again. A girl answering to her description was working, under an assumed name, as a waitress in a Fifth Avenue tea-room in New York. But as soon as Miss Smith had col-



lected her facts, and was reasonably certain that the girl was Frieda Hammer, she disappeared."

"Oh, Lil!" gasped Marjorie, sinking into her seat. She could not even explain what she meant to the others; only her room-mate realized her tremendous disappointment.

"Now I have not paid my friend anything so far," continued Miss Phillips; "but I do not feel like allowing her to go on using so much time without remuneration, for she has to work to earn her own living. So I want to know what you wish to do—drop the case?"

Marjorie was on her feet again, instantly.

"No, no, Captain! Please, not that! Can't we use the rest of the fête money—and add some from the bazaar?"

But Ruth, as usual, opposed the idea.

"I move that we pay Miss Smith for her services, and then dismiss the matter for once and all. If Frieda Hammer can get work, she certainly isn't suffering, and there are a good many more worthy channels to which we can apply our money. In my opinion, she never was any good!"

"Is there a second to Ruth's motion?" asked Captain Phillips.

"I second it!" said Barbara Hill.

"Any discussion?"

Then Lily, aroused to the support of Marjorie rather than of Frieda, made an appealing speech,

telling of the vastness of New York City, and its great temptations. She mentioned the troop's responsibility toward Frieda, at least until they could get her back home. She spoke earnestly, and the girls were greatly impressed. Marjorie cast a grateful look in her direction as Lily sat down.

The votes were taken, and the "nos" carried the day, probably rather because Marjorie and Lily were more popular than Ruth and Barbara, than because of any particular love on the part of the troop for Frieda. Indeed, most of the girls disliked her heartily, and were angry at her for stealing Marjorie's canoe; but that was Marjorie's affair, and if she wanted to search for Frieda, they intended to stand back of her.

The rest of the evening was spent in discussing the Bazaar, and all the while the girls worked busily with their needles, finishing odds and ends that had been left till the last minute.

Miss Phillips had begun with the senior Scouts and had given first them, and then the juniors, charge of the booths. The sophomores, with the single exception of Marjorie Wilkinson and Lily Andrews, and all of the freshmen, were to act merely as aids. The former two girls had been assigned the "Baby Table" for the simple reason that there were not enough upperclassmen to take charge, and they, of all the younger girls, appeared most interested.

So anxious were they to have their booth look

attractive, Marjorie and Lily arose at six o'clock the morning of the bazaar, in order to decorate it before breakfast. They secured white tissue paper, and with this completely covered up all the dark boards. Here and there articles were suspended by narrow pink and blue baby ribbon; and a great bowl of pink roses stood on one side of the counter, while on the other side was displayed a life-size doll, dressed in the most exquisite hand-made layette. The effect as a whole was dainty and charming.

Soon after breakfast the other booths—for candy, sandwiches and ice-cream, household goods, embroidery, basketry, toys, and what not,—were all arranged, and Miss Phillips threw open the doors. Dressed in their neat khaki uniforms, with spotless white aprons over their skirts, the Girl Scouts presented an attractive appearance; and Captain Phillips, gazing about her critically, felt that she had reason to be proud of her girls and their accomplishments.

The morning was not a particularly busy one; only twenty or thirty people from the village, besides a few of the pupils and teachers, dropped in. Miss Phillips' expression began to grow more anxious as the noon hour approached, and all the Scouts felt a trifle worried.

When the clock struck twelve, Marjorie picked up her almost empty candy box for the tenth time to count the few coins that jingled forlornly when she

shook it. She knew what the result would be—she had sold only two articles—but she repeated the process hopefully, as if by some magic, the total might have increased. There were exactly two dollars.

“Do you suppose it is because our things aren't pretty?” she asked Lily, although she really could not conceive of anything more exquisite than the diminutive garments on the table.

But Lily reassured her. “You just wait!” she answered; “the big crowd'll come this afternoon! Don't forget those wonderful posters Frances and Edith made—they ought to bring the buyers!”

“I hope they do!” said Marjorie, somewhat cheered by the other girl's words. “Especially after all the trouble we had putting them up!”

Both girls laughed at the recollection of climbing posts, entering stores, and respectfully requesting shop-keepers to display their home-made posters. A slight snowfall had added spice to the adventure, and helped to make the experience one to be remembered.

During the lull that followed, the Scouts seized the opportunity to leave their posts and rush over to the sandwich booth to purchase a hasty luncheon. Through their patronage, the number of sales there was increased, and the cash box returned an agreeably “full” sound when shaken. Ruth Henry, who

was serving as an aide at this table, looked well satisfied.

Business at all the other booths, however, continued to be dull until shortly after two o'clock, when the gymnasium door burst open, and what appeared to be an endless succession of noisy, laughing girls crowded in. It proved to be Miss Martin's entire seminary, turned out in a body to support their sister school in its good work.

"Hurrah for the Girl Scouts!" they shouted, and proceeded to spend a great deal of money in the purchase of both refreshments and Christmas presents.

Unfortunately for Marjorie and Lily, however, very few of the girls were interested in their booth, and therefore did not come over to buy. Three or four girls, who boasted of baby-brothers or sisters, purchased caps and fancy rattles; but the total value of their sales had hardly reached ten dollars, when the visitors left the bazaar. Both Marjorie and Lily were glad to see the other Scouts more successful than they had been during the morning, but they despaired of making their own booth worth while.

Toward half-past three, Ruth, who had been busy steadily until that time at the sandwich table, sauntered over to visit the girls at the baby booth.

"We're almost sold out," she remarked, carelessly. "How are you getting along, Marj?"

"Not so good!" sighed Marjorie. "But I surely congratulate you!"

"We have over twenty-five dollars," continued the other. "But you ought to have more because we have to sell sandwiches so cheap."

"I have only ten," admitted Marjorie, sadly.

"Only ten!" repeated Ruth. "Well, if that's all you're going to make, I don't see why you should have so much say about what we do with the money!" This last remark was added spitefully, it seemed to Marjorie.

The latter made no reply, however, and Ruth turned away.

"She certainly can be nasty, when she wants to be!" remarked Lily. "But don't you care, Marj! Anybody could sell sandwiches—especially when our own girls buy them!"

Marjorie shrugged her shoulders, and began to hum, in the attempt to regain her cheerful spirits. But no one came near her table for almost half an hour; then, about four o'clock, a dozen or more young married women hurried over in her direction.

"Baby things!" exclaimed one. "You never can get them at Jones'!"

"I wonder why they don't keep them," remarked another. "Well, here's our chance!"

The women, who were evidently coming from a tea or some such social function, simply surrounded Marjorie's table and purchased lavishly. They exclaimed admiringly over everything, and bought so

fast that the girls had to summon extra aides to help them. Finally, when they had gone, Marjorie had a minute to count the contents of her cash box. She had fifty-six dollars and twenty-five cents!

But her triumph was not yet over, for scarcely had she put the money away when a slender little woman, who had all the while been watching proceedings, approached, and called her to the side.

"I buy for Jones' store, in the village," she said quietly, "and I should like to offer you fifty dollars for the remainder of your stock."

Marjorie listened incredulously, making no attempt to hide her joy at the idea of the transaction. Glancing hastily at the clock, she saw that it was half-past four, within half an hour of closing. She accepted the woman's offer immediately.

"Thank you so much," she said. "You know it's for a good cause!"

"They are lovely things," remarked the buyer, sincerely. "Really, they are just what I have been looking for."

With trembling fingers, Marjorie and Lily folded the snowy articles gently and tied them into a bundle. It was simply wonderful to have nothing left over.

"Half an hour, and nothing to do!" said Marjorie, squeezing Lily around the waist. "Wasn't it the best luck, though!"

"Sh! Don't say anything! Let's pretend to be busy, and surprise Miss Phillips when she calls for a report!"

"And Ruth Henry, too!" added Marjorie, wickedly.

At quarter past five the last purchaser left the gymnasium, and Miss Phillips ordered the door to be closed.

"We'll leave things as they are," she said, "and come over to clear up to-night. In the meantime, you are to go back to the dormitory and prepare for supper. But there is one thing I want to know before you all leave," she concluded; "and that is—how much cash you each have. Did anyone, by any chance, sell out?"

"Yes, we did!" announced Ruth Henry, although the sandwich table had really been in charge of Elsie Lorimer.

"Fine! How much?"

"Thirty-two dollars—and some change!" Ruth glanced triumphantly at Marjorie.

"Anyone else?" inquired Miss Phillips.

"Yes," replied Marjorie. "Lily and I did. We have one hundred and six dollars, and twenty-five cents."

But amidst all the congratulations that followed, Marjorie thought only of one thing: that she had been able to answer Ruth's challenge! She had



made the most of any booth—and she felt privileged to have a say in the direction to which the money should be applied! She would not be afraid to urge again the cause of Frieda Hammer, and the Scouts' Good Turn!

## CHAPTER XV

## THE SCOUT CHRISTMAS TREE

IT WAS not until the following Friday evening, when each girl in charge of a table had made her report, that Miss Phillips was able to add up the total receipts from the sales at the bazaar. At last she looked up with a happy smile.

"Four hundred and twenty-two dollars!" she announced; and the girls broke into uproarious applause.

"Since this is our last meeting in the old year," she went on, "I especially want the new girls to take their Tenderfoot tests. But before that, and before we talk over the Christmas plans that Ruth Henry suggested several weeks ago, I desire to read you some letters.

"I went to the office of our little local newspaper, *The Star*, and asked whether any poor children had written to Santa Claus through them.

"The woman in charge was awfully nice; she smiled sort of tenderly, as if all the children belonged to her.

“‘Indeed we have,’ she replied, opening a drawer. ‘Look at this bunch.’”

“And she handed me these”—Miss Phillips held up a handful of torn, dirty pieces of all kinds of paper, except writing paper—“and I discovered there were thirty-two of them, all so quaint and funny. So I said I would put the matter up to you Scouts to-night, and report to her to-morrow.”

“Oh, let’s give them a party, and a tree, and the presents they want,” cried Marjorie, anxious for everyone to know that she did not want to monopolize all of the money for Frieda.

“Read them, please, Captain!” begged Frances.

Miss Phillips opened two or three, selected one, and read slowly, apparently encountering difficulty in the spelling:

“Dear Santa Klaus:

“Pleas send me a dol that opens hur ise with love Mary Connelly.”

After that she read half a dozen or so, each one as laboriously composed as the first, asking St. Nicholas to bring them the things nearest their hearts.

“But when could we have the party?” asked the Captain. “It’s too soon to have it this Saturday afternoon, and next week the older children will have school.”

"Couldn't we have it at four o'clock?" suggested Ethel; "I should think we could keep them out until half-past five, and then we could take them home ourselves, because, of course, it would be too dark by then for them to go alone."

They decided upon Thursday afternoon, for the girls were to leave Miss Allen's at noon on Friday; and a hundred dollars was appropriated for the party and the presents.

The time seemed all too short for the committee in charge; indeed, every member of the troop served in some way. Miss Phillips took Frances and Ethel to the city with her to select the presents and the tree ornaments; four of the girls wrote the invitations, and half a dozen were to attend to the refreshments and decorations. Lily Andrews, because she was stout and jolly, was awarded the supreme honor of being Santa Claus; and she spent much time preparing her costume.

At last everything was in readiness, and the Scouts gathered in the gymnasium. A big tree stood in the center, glistening with tinsel and shining with brightly colored balls. Underneath, attractively wrapped in Christmas paper and ribbon, the presents were invitingly piled. Santa Claus, with several of the girls who were to assist "him," was hidden in Miss Phillips's office.

The guests—everyone of the thirty-two ragged little children, and several additional younger broth-

ers and sisters besides—arrived, dressed in what was probably their best clothes—just as the little Ruggles came to Carol's famous party in "The Birds' Christmas Carol." Edith and Frances received them at the door and helped them remove their coats and hats.

With exclamations of "Oh!" and "Ah!" they stood perfectly still, lost in admiration of the Christmas tree. They had never seen such a lovely one before.

"Will everyone please sit down upon the pillows?" asked Miss Phillips, indicating a row of sofa cushions arranged around the tree.

Doris Sands and Emily Rankin gave out the popcorn and candy toys. The children were too much awe-struck to think of talking. They just sat still and gazed, all the while sucking their candy, and looking expectantly at the alluring parcels under the tree.

In a short time, from the direction of the office, a great chorus of song came:

"Silent night, holy night,  
All is calm, all is bright——"

the famous old Christmas carol that children and grown people everywhere love.

When the last notes of the song had died away, Edith Evans, the story-teller of the group, related the pretty little legend of "Why the Chimes Rang"

—telling how a small boy, who had only ten cents to give at Christmas time, gave it with his whole heart, and the magical chimes, which sounded only for great gifts, and which had been silent now for many years, rang out through the clear stillness of that Christmas night.

There is perhaps no other Christmas story which contains the real Christmas spirit so much as this one, with its simple message of whole-hearted giving; and it did not fail to produce the desired effect. The children were just in the mood of what followed: the appearance of Santa Claus!

With a jolly "Ha! Ha!" and the ringing of sleigh bells, he came in through the open door carrying a huge pack on his back, and was greeted with tremendous applause.

Reaching into his pocket, he took out the notes and held them up to examine.

"I got every one of your letters," he said, "and I hope you will all be satisfied with your presents. I have tried to do the best I could. Ha! Ha! Ha! Christmas is a jolly time!"

Santa's laughter was so real and his enjoyment so genuine that the children beamed with happiness. It seemed as if their dreams had really come true.

"Here's a package for Mary Connelly," he said, taking off his pack; "and here's one for Peter Myers."

The children hesitated a moment, and then went

forward to receive their gifts. Edith and Frances brought the others out from beneath the tree, and there were half a dozen left over, even after the unexpected guests had been provided for.

"And a box of candy for everybody," concluded Santa Claus, reaching for the pile of boxes, each wrapped in white paper, and handing them to his helpers.

"And now I must be gone!" he said. "I've many places to visit before Christmas day. A merry Christmas to all!" he cried, and as they answered, "The same to you!" he vanished through the doorway. The tingling of sleighbells announced the fact that he had gone.

The short winter day was drawing to a close, and the children suddenly realized, as they were looking at their presents, that it was getting quite dark. But in an instant, as if by magic, the tree was alight with many gaily-colored electric bulbs, which gleamed and sparkled so gloriously that they all gasped and gazed in wonder.

While the refreshments were being prepared, Ethel and Doris started a game, to the winner of which a prize "stocking" was given. Just as this was concluded, Miss Phillips called that they were ready.

Behind the tree there had been a row of screens to hide the preparations. Now these were removed, and the most beautiful sight that the children had

ever seen appeared before their eyes. A table piled with goodies of every kind decorated with holly and mistletoe and Christmas candles and candies. Three large bowls in the center of the table contained red strings which extended to every child's place.

The little guests sat down and pulled their red ribbons—and to their great delight, each received another present. Then they began to eat. There were chicken sandwiches, and cocoa with whipped cream, and ice-cream, cake, candy, fruit, and nuts. The Scouts simply loaded their plates, telling them that they might carry home what they could not eat.

They were having such a delightful party that they were all surprised when six o'clock came, and Miss Phillips gave the signal for departure. The Scouts put on their hats and coats, and, with their arms laden with goodies, and gifts, and holly, the children returned to the village.

Lily reappeared, dressed in her Scout uniform, to accompany them. One of the children, who had been looking at her closely for several minutes, exclaimed abruptly,

“Santa Claus is a Girl Scout!”

The Scouts burst out laughing.

“He was this time,” explained Edith, kindly; “for the real Santa had too much to do, so he asked us to help him.”

“You are *all* Santa Clauses!” corrected the child.



"I think Girl Scouts are the most nicest people in the whole world!"

And Pansy troop, to the last girl, was satisfied with the work it had accomplished, and the real Christmas cheer it had brought to these children's hearts.

## CHAPTER XVI

## THE VISIT TO HAMMERS'

THE Christmas holidays had always meant a great deal to Marjorie. There was not only the joy of the holiday season, and of giving and receiving presents, but the pleasure of seeing the family and her old friends again, of going to parties, and of entertaining. The preceeding year she had given a house-party to the freshmen and sophomore members of the sorority to which she belonged at that time, and they had all had a lovely time. Ruth, who had never been a member of the secret society, had been left out—a proceeding which so angered her as to cause her to seek in some way to get even with Marjorie. And this had been the beginning of all the trouble! Now as she looked back upon it, the whole affair seemed childish; she realized that whatever parties she gave in the future would include Ruth.

Marjorie's mother had told her that she might invite Lily, or any other friend, to spend part or all of the holidays with her; and she had received a lovely

invitation from Doris's mother to go to their home for Christmas week. But she had resolutely refused all these suggestions; she had other plans—not of a social nature.

It was with this purpose in mind that she visited Miss Phillips the night of the children's party.

"Could you possibly spare me a day during your holiday, Miss Phillips?" she asked. "I want to go and see Frieda's mother."

"Why, what an idea!" exclaimed the teacher in surprise. "But do you think she knows where her daughter is?"

"I think she must know something. And maybe she could tell us why Frieda ran away. And——" Marjorie paused, shyly,—“and I want to get word to her if I can that I don't mind her taking my canoe!"

"Marjorie, you're a strange girl!" remarked Miss Phillips, looking at her quizzically. Then, "But have you asked your parents' consent?"

"Yes; papa said he would drive us over. But he also said that he wouldn't let me go without you. And he was afraid it would be asking too much of you!"

"Not at all. I could easily arrange to meet you. What day do you want to go?"

"Whatever day suits you best."

Miss Phillips went to her desk and consulted an engagement pad.

"How about Friday—a week from to-morrow?" she suggested. "Then, if it should rain, we could go Saturday."

"Fine!" concluded Marjorie, rising to go. But Miss Phillips detained her for a moment.

"Marjorie, I want to thank you for your lovely gift. It was sweet of you to do all that work for me."

The girl smiled, delighted that her favorite teacher was pleased. In fact, Miss Phillips was not only her favorite teacher, but the only one in whom she took any interest.

"I'm glad you liked it, Miss Phillips," she said, as she turned to leave the office.

Marjorie and Ruth rode home in the train together. As soon as the girls were away from Miss Allen's, and there was no longer any rivalry raging between them, Ruth became her old self again, and expected to have Marjorie once more as her best friend. But Marjorie was not to be so easily won.

"Mother writes that there's a new family moved in next door to us," remarked Ruth, "and she says that the son—a boy a little older than we are, seems very nice. I thought maybe I'd ask him over some night during Christmas week, if you and Jack can come, too. We could play bridge, and dance a little."

"That would be lovely," murmured Marjorie, in a preoccupied manner, for her thoughts had flown in

a different direction—to her own *one* important plan for the coming week.

“How would next Friday suit?” suggested Ruth.

Marjorie shook her head decidedly. “Sorry, but I can’t possibly!”

Ruth regarded her curiously. What plans could Marjorie have—so early? No doubt it had something to do with John Hadley.

“If it’s John, why, bring him along, and I’ll try to get another girl,” she ventured.

“No; it has nothing to do with John. I expect to be out of town.”

“At Lily’s?”

“No; I won’t be visiting anybody.”

“Oh, well,” said Ruth, sulkily, “if you don’t want to tell me, you don’t have to. I don’t care.”

“I can’t very well tell you, Ruth,” replied Marjorie; “and besides, you wouldn’t be interested.”

“Then when can you come?”

“Tuesday or Wednesday, whichever you like.”

The girls finally agreed upon Wednesday, and separated with the promise to visit each other before then. But Ruth resented Marjorie’s secrecy and tried to imagine what her important engagement could possibly be.

Christmas, and the next four days passed happily and quickly, and almost before she realized it, Friday had come, bringing to Marjorie her chance for adventure.

Wrapped snugly in her mother's fur coat, and with the big robe tucked in around her, she sat on the front seat of the machine that cold, clear morning of the end of December. She was very happy; she felt, indeed, that she was doing something worth while, and the prospect of a nice long ride with Miss Phillips added not a little to her pleasure.

After they had driven about fifteen miles they met the Scout Captain, and then continued on their way. Ten miles before they reached their destination they stopped at a hotel for dinner.

"Suppose they don't live there any longer," remarked Marjorie. "All our trip for nothing!"

"No, for we could probably get some information from Mrs. Brubaker," replied Miss Phillips. "But I don't think they'd move."

"It isn't likely," assented Marjorie.

It was two o'clock when they arrived at the Brubaker farm. The front door opened, and Mrs. Brubaker appeared.

"Well, of all things!" she exclaimed, recognizing Miss Phillips and Marjorie in the car. "This surely is a surprise!"

When they were all comfortably seated before the open fire, Mr. Wilkinson explained their mission, and the good woman seemed amazed at their news.

"We had no idea Frieda wasn't still at school. Her mother never said a word. Oh, I'm so sorry!"

They talked a little while, and then leaving her

father with Mr. Brubaker, Marjorie and her Captain proceeded toward the tenant house where the Hammers lived.

Mrs. Hammer did not recognize them at first. Then Miss Phillips explained.

"We want to know if you have any news of Frieda, Mrs. Hammer," she said, very politely.

"Come in," invited the older woman, holding open the door a little wider.

"We haven't heard a word since she ran away," continued Miss Phillips, as soon as they were inside, "except that a friend of mine saw a girl answering her description in New York."

"That's where she is, I reckon," assented Mrs. Hammer, "but that's all I know. From her onct in a while I get a letter, and can write to her care of—what d'ye call it?—general delivery. But I can't write very good."

"Oh, may we see the letters?" asked Marjorie, eagerly.

"Yes—I don't mind. You people sure treated her white. I don't know what's got into her."

The woman crossed the room, which was untidy and dirty, and pulled out a drawer in the table. There, among heterogeneous trash, Marjorie noticed several letters. Mrs. Hammer tossed them into Miss Phillips's lap.

"You can read them all," she said, "while I go look to the baby."

Miss Phillips noticed Marjorie's excitement, and politely handed her the letters—there were three of them,—which the girl opened with trembling fingers. Apparently, all of them were short.

"This must be the first," she said, and read aloud,

"DEAR MA,

"I ran away in that girl's bot becaus a girl insulted me. I brot my clothes and a pencil and I stayed at an empty hous to-night.

"FRIEDA."

Marjorie put the paper back into the envelope with a sigh.

"That doesn't tell us a whole lot, does it?" she observed. "Except that we know now for sure that the girl that old woman described at the empty house was Frieda."

"But what does she mean about a girl insulting her?" asked Miss Phillips, in a puzzled tone.

Marjorie frowned; she had no desire to tell tales about Ruth. Accordingly, she related the story, but withheld the name of the girl concerned.

"Frieda certainly must be skillful as a boatsman," remarked Miss Phillips, "to be able to come that far."

"Yes," said Marjorie, opening the letter with the second earliest postmark. Then, "Oh, listen to this:

"I got to Trenton but befor I crossed the river I



sold the bot for \$20. I'm going to New York for to get work.

"FRIEDA."

"Trenton!" repeated Miss Phillips. "Marjorie, we might be able to locate your canoe if we search all the boat-houses and the river-front there, and on the opposite side of the Delaware!"

"That's an idea!" cried Marjorie. "I'll ask papa——"

But she was too anxious to read the third and last letter to finish her sentence. Hastily she pulled it from the envelope.

"DEAR MA,

"I'm in New York now and you can rite me care Gen. Del. My money is most gone. I got a waitres job.

"FRIEDA."

"But she hasn't, any more!" protested Marjorie; "at least, if Miss Smith is right!"

At that moment Mrs. Hammer returned with the baby, and Marjorie asked her all sorts of questions to which she could not reply, but only shake her head hopelessly.

"But aren't you the least bit worried?" asked Marjorie, picturing how her own mother would feel under similar circumstances. For Mrs. Hammer was certainly amazingly calm.

"Ach! she's old enough to take care of herself!" cried the woman impatiently. "New York's a fine place—I'm glad she is there!"

Marjorie again thought of the great city as she had seen it when she visited Lily at Thanksgiving, and she shuddered at the confusion and the danger of it all. And to a country girl like Frieda, it must be even more terrifying. But she said nothing further; Mrs. Hammer had no conception of it, and probably never would have. She was relieved to see Miss Phillips make a motion to go.

All during the ride home, she was unusually quiet, but it was not from despair. The visit, she felt, had not been in vain; she had formulated a plan which she meant to put into effect as soon as she reached home. She would write to Frieda and tell her how much she wanted her to come back. She would assure the girl that she did not mind about the canoe—she would even make her a present of it. And she would be glad to send Frieda the money for a return ticket if she would only promise to come back!

## CHAPTER XVII

## RUTH FINDS THE CANOE

RUTH HENRY had always been a pretty girl, but in the past year she had grown even more attractive. Though small of stature, there was nothing insignificant about her; indeed, she was of the striking type which attracts immediate attention, even of the casual observer. Always planning some activity, or involved in some scheme to further her own interests, she was a creature of perpetual animation. This very vivacity was one of her chief charms among young and old.

It was no particular surprise to anyone, therefore, that Harold Mason was smitten by her at first sight. Here, he felt, was his ideal type of girl: pretty, petite, feminine, yet combining with all those characteristics a love of sport and adventure, and a spirit of daring that was almost boyish. What a comrade! he thought.

The boy himself was far from unattractive. Raised in Virginia, he possessed that unconscious charm of the Southerner that is always particularly

pleasing to women. He drawled his words, dropping his "r's"; and he had a little habit of smiling at the end of his remarks. Like Ruth, however, Harold Mason was an only child; and, like her, he was spoiled. Possessing a car of his own—even though it happened to be only a Ford sedan—he came and went as he pleased, with the consequence that his studies had often suffered. Now, when he should have been in college, he was merely finishing the latter half of his senior year at High School.

"I tell you what, Ruth," he said on the second day of their holiday (they felt by now as if they had known each other all of their lives), "let's have a regular good time this week. Let's go somewhere every single day!"

Ruth smiled faintly; she could not help being flattered by her conquest.

"Suppose I have other engagements?"

"Chuck them—ah—just for once!"

"And maybe mother won't let me."

"Well, tease her!"

"And then," added Ruth, "you haven't met Marjorie Wilkinson. She's considered (by some) the most attractive girl at our school!"

"Oh, forget her! I've seen her, even if I haven't met her. Her type doesn't appeal to me!"

Ruth laughed good naturedly, and surrendered. But she made one reservation.

"I promised Jack Wilkinson I'd go to the movies with him on Friday."

Harold closed his lips tightly, and shrugged his shoulders.

"As you please," he said; "maybe I will ask Marjorie for that day."

"Then you'll get left!" retorted Ruth triumphantly. "She has a date, too!"

"Well—then I'll ask Miss Maria!" he concluded, mentioning one who was the typical "old-maid" of the town, and who unconsciously bore the brunt of all the young people's jokes.

When Jack and Marjorie came over to Ruth's on Wednesday evening, Harold found the girl to be just as he had expected: rather quiet and diffident, even pretty, but not striking-looking; and he made no attempt to become intimate with her. After they had tired of playing cards, whenever Jack and Ruth saw fit to dance together, he offered to do likewise with Marjorie, as a mere matter of form. But he did not find her easy to talk to.

"Jack, what's Marj going to do on Friday?" Ruth asked as she poured the cocoa from the chafing dish on the tea-table.

Marjorie looked up, amused. She was sincerely thankful that Jack knew as little as Ruth about her coming adventure.

"You can search me!" replied the boy. "I did hear dad mention an auto ride."

"Your father?" repeated Ruth. "Is that all? And here I was picturing a secret meeting with an unknown lover——"

"Wrong as usual!" said Marjorie, a little sharply. "I told you that before, Ruth."

Harold Mason looked up quickly, incensed at the tone Marjorie had unconsciously used towards Ruth. In that instant he became her enemy; if she and Ruth should be rival contestants in any cause again, he vowed to himself that he would do all in his power to help the latter.

"Well, if it's nothing exciting, why don't you tell us about it?" said Jack.

"It's a personal matter, Jack," said Marjorie; "I should think you and Ruth would understand that by now!"

Apparently, Ruth was squelched. "I beg your pardon," she said humbly. But the very next instant she winked at Harold, and he knew her well enough to interpret the signal as a challenge against Marjorie.

"Don't make any engagement for Friday!" she whispered, as Harold left the house with the others.

By pre-arranged signals, Ruth and Harold sat waiting in his car at eight-thirty on Friday morning. The machine did not stand in front of either Mason's or Henry's house; instead, it was drawn up before a provision store, where, to the passer-by, it might appear to be waiting while Mrs. Mason or

Mrs. Wilkinson was making purchases inside.

The young people did not have to wait long, for a few minutes before nine, Jack Wilkinson came hurrying towards them.

"They're gone!" he shouted. "The other direction—out the Main street."

In a second, he was inside the car, and Harold stepped on the starter and released the emergency.

"How long ago?" he asked, as the machine began to move forward.

"Just long enough for me to get my things on and run over here. About five minutes, I should say."

"Just Marj and your father?" asked Ruth.

"Yes."

"Is he a fast driver?" inquired Harold.

"Pretty fast, except in traffic," replied Jack.

"Well, speed up, Harold," urged Ruth. She leaned back against the seat contentedly; it would be such a lark to worry Marjorie, especially since she had been so secret about the whole proceeding.

"And what am I to do if we do catch them?" asked Harold.

"Just follow them, and make their lives miserable," laughed Ruth.

"I think it must have something to do with Miss Phillips," remarked Jack. "I heard her name mentioned once or twice."

Ruth repressed an involuntary start.

Miss Phillips! So this was the scheme: Marjorie

was merely courting popularity with the Scout Captain! Probably her rival intended to wheedle Miss Phillips into giving her the first-class test privately, so that she might be the first in the troop to receive that honor! A hard look came into Ruth's eyes; she was more resolved than ever to do all in her power to make the other girl's project fail. But she said nothing of all this to her companions.

They followed the main road for about five miles, passing several machines, but never catching sight of the desired one. Harold had been keeping to about thirty miles an hour, but as he reached the level road and the open country, he let it out to thirty-five.

Ruth talked incessantly, telling the boys all about the Scout parties and the hockey games. Although she had not mentioned Frieda Hammer, she suddenly remarked,

"Wasn't it dreadful about Marj's canoe?"

"Yes," replied Jack; "who do you suppose stole it?"

"Don't you know?" exclaimed Ruth. "Why, that thief our Scout troop adopted to reform. But it serves Marj right! She was the strongest one for doing it."

Harold, who was in the dark about all this, was naturally curious to hear the whole story, and Ruth recounted it as briefly as possible.

All this time the youthful driver was speeding his Ford at its very limit, and gradually gaining upon a



speck in the distance which appeared to be a touring car.

"By George! that's our Buick!" cried Jack. "I'll just bet anything!"

But Harold could not go any faster, and the other car was making good time. He continued, however, to keep it in sight, while Ruth breathlessly urged him on.

The houses were closer together now, and Harold unconsciously slackened his pace.

"Must we go slow?" asked Ruth, disappointed.

"Yes; the law's fifteen. But we'll take a chance on twenty-five!"

"Still, dad will have to slow up, too," remarked Jack, consolingly. "And maybe we'll catch him on the open road again."

"It's almost like following elopers," laughed Harold. "I do love a chase."

"So do I," agreed Ruth. Then, "Oh, see that bridge; do we have to cross that?"

"Yes," replied Jack; "for that will take us into Trenton. And they must be headed that way."

They slowed down before crossing the bridge when suddenly there was a terrific report, like an explosion, which startled them so that they almost jumped out of their skins. Harold applied the brakes quickly, and swung the car sharply towards the side of the road.

"Good night!" he exclaimed; "a blow-out! I was

a fool to leave that bum shoe on the rear! And the spare is perfectly new!"

"We'll never catch them now!" mourned Ruth, dejectedly.

They sat gazing at each other helplessly.

"Well, we'll never catch them if we sit here all day; that's a sure thing!" announced Jack, coming to life. "Come on, Mason! Let's break all records for a quick change!"

They scrambled out into the road.

"Jerusalem!" exclaimed Jack, poking a finger at the jagged hole in the flat tire, where the tread was so worn that the lining of the shoe was exposed. "Look at that hole!"

He peeled off his coat and tossed it into the machine, and handed his watch to Ruth, saying,

"Here, Ruth; time us, from now on."

Harold, following his example, was rummaging under the back seat for his tools; he threw a kit and a jack out into the road calling,

"There you are, Wilkinson! You unscrew the rim-cleats, and I'll jack her up."

"That's a funny-looking jack!" observed Ruth, looking at it curiously.

"It's a new kind," retorted Harold knowingly, thinking that Ruth, like most girls, probably knew nothing about tools.

Jack glanced over his shoulder at the object; then

dropped what he was doing to examine it more closely.

"By George! Ruth's right! Where is the part that goes under the axle?"

Harold was out of the machine in a jiffy.

"Great snakes!" he howled, tearing his hair. "It does come off; and if I can't find it under the seat, we're out of luck, that's all!"

He dived again into the car, leaving the other two staring at the dismembered jack. They heard him fumbling around again, and, after a minute, he slid out and sat upon the running-board.

"No use! I guess I left it home," he said.

"Then I guess I won't need this," said Ruth, handing Jack his watch.

Suddenly, the humor of the situation struck all three of them at once, and they burst into shrieks of laughter.

"Well, catching them is now out of the question," said Jack, after the merriment had subsided; "but we'll have to get home again somehow."

"Yes," agreed Harold, "the question is—how?"

"There must be a garage around here somewhere, and we could borrow a jack," suggested Ruth.

"Shall I go ahead and look for one?" asked Jack.

"Oh, we'll stop a passing machine, and borrow one," said Harold.

"But none has passed us yet," protested Ruth, "and we might have to wait here all day."

"I don't think so; there ought to be lots of traffic on this road; it's a main highway. They just won't come because we want them to."

"There are several little houses down there," said Jack, indicating a group of boat-houses along the banks of the river, about fifty yards away; "perhaps one of them would have a jack."

"To jack up the boats with?" asked Harold, sardonically.

"It won't hurt to try, anyway," retorted the other boy. "Come on, Ruth! We'll go ask."

To see Ruth walk away with Jack and leave him sitting there alone, was too much for Harold.

"Jack! I say, Jack!" he called. "Come back a minute!"

The boy and girl retraced their steps.

"What do you want?"

"I was just thinking—you might crawl under the car——"

"Eh?"

"I say, *you* might crawl under the car," repeated Harold.

"What for?"

"Jack 'er up!"

He jumped up from the running-board just in time to avoid the other's clutches.

"Now, Harold!" protested Ruth. "As if this were not enough, you must make it worse with bad puns."

"I won't do it again," promised Harold, with mock penitency. "But wait a minute—I'm going with you."

He tossed the tools on the floor of the car and slammed the door.

"Jack, my boy," he resumed, "I really believe your idea is a good one, an inspiration, a mark of genius; I verily believe we are on the eve of a great discovery——"

"Oh, you dry up!" snorted Jack. "I don't really think we'll find one. But it won't hurt to ask."

Upon closer inspection all of the boat-houses appeared to be deserted, except the one farthest away. This was slightly removed from the others, and more ramshackle looking; but someone was evidently there, for they could hear the sound of hammering, which seemed to come from within. Over the door hung a home-made sign, with the inscription:

JOHN SLACK,  
BOATS FOR HIRE.

"See anything funny about that name?" asked Harold.

The others examined it more closely.

"He's got the 'N' printed upside-down."

"Sure enough!" laughed Ruth. "Well, of all things!"

"Judging from the noise he's making," continued Harold, "John's business isn't very slack!"

"Are you commencing again?" groaned Jack.

"That will do, Harold! You've said quite enough!" warned Ruth.

They halted before the open doorway, through which they could see an old man bending over an up-turned boat which he was repairing.

"Good day, Mr. Slack!" called Harold.

The man paused with his hammer in mid-air, and raised his head; a dirty white beard which seemed to start at his eyes, grew down over his chest.

"Howdy! What can I do for you?"

"We've had a puncture," explained Harold, "and we want to know whether you have a jack that we could borrow?"

The man shook his head.

"Never had no use for one," he replied.

Their faces fell; but as they turned to leave, the old man straightened up, and called out,

"Hold on a minute! What kind of car you got?"

"A Ford," Harold told him.

"There's your jack, then," he said, pointing to a pile of lumber in one corner of the room; "that there twelve-foot beam!"

"How?" queried the boy.

In reply, the man worked his arms up and down, as if he were operating a lever.

"Just stick it underneath and hist on one end," he explained.

"Can it be done?" asked Harold, doubtfully.

"I seen it done onc't—I guess you fellers kin do it. Maybe not if you had a bigger car—I dunno. Yer welcome to try. But you want to take a block to stick underneath the axle when you get 'er raised."

Following his suggestion, the boys raised the beam to their shoulders, and carried it back to the car, Ruth following with the smaller piece. Placing one end of the timber beneath the axle and raising the other end, they found that without effort they could lift the rear of the machine sufficiently for Ruth to insert the block.

"Golly!" exclaimed Harold; "I believe we could lift a truck this way. Pretty smart of old Santa Claus to think of it."

In a short time the change was made, the tools put away; and resting the improvised jack along one side of the car, across the mudguards, they returned with it to its owner.

"The job's done, Mr. Slack!" announced Harold, as they flung the beam to the ground. "I'm very much obliged to you for your help."

He slipped a coin into the old man's hand.

"That's all right!" was the answer. "I'm much obliged to you. I wouldn't have no use for a real jack," he repeated.

Meanwhile, Ruth was carrying on an earnest conversation in undertones with Jack. She was directing his attention among the various small boats which filled the long room, to a particular one in the far corner, which was noticeable because of its bright green paint, and because it was the only canoe among many row-boats.

"It certainly looks like Marjorie's," she was saying.

"Where did you get that canoe?" she demanded sharply, turning to the boat-house keeper.

"I bought it from a young lady," he replied. "She paddled down the river. I give twenty dollars for it."

"That canoe was stolen!" cried Ruth, indignantly, as if to accuse the old man.

He thrust out his beard.

"How do you know?" he asked.

"I recognize it!" replied the girl.

He looked relieved and smiled.

"They's a good many models of the Oldtown canoe that looks like that one, young lady."

The graceful craft was lying on its side so that the interior was exposed more to their view than the sides.

"I'll identify it," said Ruth, undaunted. "There's a long scratch in the paint, about an inch from the keel, near the middle—we got stuck on a rock one day."



"You could find that on most any canoe," replied the man.

"Well—let me see—oh, there's candle grease on the inside, at each end! That's from the Japanese lanterns we had there, the night of the water-picnic," she told the boys. "And the name was painted on it in red letters—*The Scout!*"

At this, the old man's eyes opened wide.

"I guess you're right, lady," he said. "She's called *The Scout*, all right; but I don't know about the scratch and the candle grease—I never noticed that!"

"Will you sell it back to me, if you're convinced?" asked Jack.

"Gimme what I paid for it, and she's your'n. Never was much good to me, anyhow; I never hired it onc't—mostly too rough for a canoe in the river."

"Will it be all right if I pay you five dollars now, and return with the rest, say to-morrow, and get the canoe?"

"Suits me," agreed the other.

So the bargain was struck, and they crossed the room to examine *The Scout*. There, sure enough, were the evidences as Ruth had given them. At last, the canoe was found!

"I told you you were on the eve of a great discovery, didn't I?" said Harold, as they were driving home.

"But you never would have found the canoe, if it hadn't been for me," corrected Ruth.

"Marjorie certainly will be glad!" remarked her brother.

"Marjorie!" cried Ruth; "why, I'd forgotten all about her—and the chase!"

Then she fell silent for a long time. She was thinking of the medal of merit Miss Phillips had offered for the finding of Frieda; and she could not see why, if no one were successful, the finding of the canoe might not be considered the next thing to the finding of Frieda. It would be much better that Marjorie should never know about their pursuit of her.

Breaking her silence, she said,

"Promise me, both of you, that you won't tell Marj how we chased her?"

They both swore solemn oaths.

After supper, she and Harold strolled over to Wilkinsons' to tell Marjorie the news of the canoe, for Jack had promised to say nothing about it until they came. But they found her singularly unappreciative.

"I knew Frieda sold it before she reached Trenton," she remarked; "and I intended to get papa to take me to find it to-morrow!"

"Of all the ungrateful people!" snapped Ruth, as they left the house. "And we don't know yet where Marj went," she added.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## ALONE IN THE CITY

AT HEART, Frieda Hammer was not a bad girl. But for all these years her moral sense had remained undeveloped. She was like a man who has worked in a factory all his life, where the continuous roar of the machinery dulls his sense of hearing, so that all the finer tones are lost upon him. Frieda was so unaccustomed to the qualities of unselfishness and friendliness, that when she came in contact with them she could only mistrust them. Ruth Henry was the only member of the Girl Scout troop that she could seem to understand, for she was the only one who was out and out for herself. Marjorie Wilkinson was a puzzle to her, and always had been.

And just as the man without an ear for music would not appreciate an orchestra if he heard one, so this mentally-starved girl could not understand the charity and sweetness of the Scouts. But gradually, under the influence of her teacher, of Mrs. Johnson, and of her normal life, she began to realize what it all meant. She secretly liked Marjorie,

but she was too proud to show it; instead, she decided to study hard, and bring credit to the Scouts.

All this was before the Japanese fête. Then, that night, like a harsh discord on one instrument breaking the harmony of an orchestra, she heard Ruth's detestable remark: "Here comes Frieda Hammer—look out for your jewelry!" her whole nature rebelled. Sick at heart, and regretting that she had ever allowed the Scouts to persuade her to leave home, she now wanted, more than anything else, to get away from them. She hated them all, Marjorie included!

Her first thought was to leave immediately for home, but upon remembering that while there she was always unhappy and wishing to be elsewhere, it occurred to her that this was her opportunity to strike out for herself. Casting about in her mind for some loophole of escape, she hit upon the plan of stealing Marjorie's canoe, paddling down the creek till it joined the river; and then, at the approach of some town, of attempting to sell it for what she could get, and continuing the remainder of her journey to New York by train. Why New York, rather than any other city, she never stopped to consider; it stood out as the one town to which anyone would wish to go.

That this way of traveling was much slower and more laborious than setting out upon foot at the outset, never occurred to her; it seemed like an easy

way, less liable of detection, and it appealed to her love of adventure. Once in New York, she calculated, she would become a waitress in some "swell" restaurant, where she would make lots of money to spend for clothes. A hired girl of the Brubakers who had been a waitress in New York, once told her of the lavish tips she used to receive; and the future, as Frieda pictured it, seemed particularly rosy and independent. But to get there was the thing; once there—almost anything might happen! Why, some rich man might fall in love with her and marry her. That she was but fourteen, and neither attractive nor cultured, never entered her head; she had always longed for adventure, and she meant to have it.

Frieda would have put her plan into effect immediately, if she had only possessed a little money. As it was, she was afraid to set out with an empty purse. But when, over a week later, the Scouts sent her the cash for her ticket home at Thanksgiving, it seemed as if all obstacles were now removed.

Accordingly, she carried out her project the following day. She attended school in the morning, and came home for lunch as usual, so as not to arouse suspicion; but shortly after one o'clock, she slipped out with her bag all packed. And her most precious possessions were Marjorie's pink dress and sweater!

If she had carefully calculated her time, she could not have chosen a more favorable hour for escape.

All of Miss Allen's girls, and the teachers as well, were at luncheon, and the public school children were already back at their desks. Finally, one-thirty in the afternoon was just the time that Mrs. Johnson invariably selected for her nap!

Cautiously watching the campus, she untied the rope, and stepped into the canoe. It was a simple matter to paddle across the lake to the spot where the small stream joined it; but it was a more difficult feat to carry the canoe even a short distance on dry land. Frieda Hammer was a strong girl, but had it not been for the thought of the price she could get for it, and the distress its loss would bring to the Scouts, she would have cast aside her heavy burden then and there. She wished, too, that it had belonged to Ruth instead of to Marjorie, but she kept assuring herself that she was glad to bring trouble to any member of Pansy troop.

The distance, however, was short, and in a few minutes she was back again on the water. She paddled on and on, encountering no further obstacles, but was surprised at the speed with which the afternoon seemed to pass. The shadows began to lengthen; and there was still no sight of a river. She realized that soon she would be obliged to stop for the night. Through the trees, over on the left bank of the stream, she distinguished a house. Perhaps she might rest there for the night!

It was the "haunted house" which the Scouts later

visited, but Frieda did not know that. Had she heard the tale of the ghost, she would probably have hesitated before remaining there alone all night; but no such story troubled her imagination. She was thankful for the shelter and protection, for the night was chilly.

Opening her bag, she took out the hasty lunch she had packed, and ate it greedily. She was hungry and tired. A few minutes later, she was fast asleep on the floor.

She awoke at dawn, thoroughly chilled, but refreshed, nevertheless, by her night's sleep. She did not lose a moment in collecting her things, and ran down to the creek. To her joy, she found the canoe just where she had left it.

The remainder of the journey, the sale of the canoe to the boatman by the river-front, and the ride to New York, were accomplished without accident or delay, and the girl finally found herself in the great city—the place of her dreams!

Perhaps it was Frieda's good fairy, or perhaps it was the answer to Marjorie's prayers, that brought the strange girl to the attention of the Traveler's Aid agent. Confused by the crowd, dazzled by the vastness of the station, unable to tell one direction from another, she stood bewildered, seeing steps on all sides. What should she do? She hesitated; turned around, and bumped into this good friend.

"Excuse me," she said, in the manner her teacher

had taught her at school, "but could you tell me of a nice boarding house? I came here to work."

The woman looked at her kindly, pitying her from the bottom of her heart. To her, she was only a child, alone, strange, in the great city of New York.

"Yes, I know of a nice boarding house," she replied. "But have you a place to work?"

"Not yet!"

"Have you any money?"

"Over thirty dollars!" replied Frieda, to whom it was a princely sum.

Frieda was grateful, indeed, to be put upon the right car, and to have in her hand the written directions to the boarding house which the agent mentioned. In a short time she was established in her room—a bare unattractive one on the fourth floor, not nearly so nice as Mrs. Johnson's, but as good as she could afford. She meant to get work at once; already she was beginning to appreciate what the Girl Scouts had done for her.

She walked the streets for ten days, without success, looking for work. And then, on the eleventh, just when her money was beginning to be exhausted, she found it. Stating her age as seventeen, she obtained a situation as waitress in an attractive little tea-room on Fifth Avenue. Under ordinary circumstances she would never have been able to get such a place, for the other girls were of a higher type, but two waitresses had developed scarlet fever, and the



proprietress was encountering difficulty in replacing them.

Frieda was given a black sateen dress and a white cap and apron, and instructed in the finer points of courtesy and service. She spent some of her first wages for powder and rouge, and learned to twist her hair up, according to the prevailing fashion. On the whole, she passed very easily for seventeen or eighteen.

But as the days went by, she found her life singularly monotonous. The proprietress paid the girls small salaries, expecting them to live on tips. But Frieda Hammer received very few tips, for she was not a very successful waitress. The regular patrons avoided her table, and the newcomers were usually displeased with her service, and tipped her grudgingly, or not at all.

Then, during the Thanksgiving holidays, she saw Marjorie and Lily, and a great longing to go back seized her, a desire to study more, and to accept the friendship these Girl Scouts so generously offered. But she thought of the canoe and the money she had stolen, and, overcome with shame, she disappeared into the kitchen to prevent the girls from recognizing her.

About the middle of December she lost her situation, and was forced to seek another, without even a reference. Christmas, which on the farm had meant little except what Mrs. Brubaker had done for her

family, took on a new significance as she watched the shops and the decorations, and preparations everywhere. In her imagination she saw the Christmas the Girl Scouts would have, and thought of Mrs. Johnson; and in her heart she was homesick for what might have been.

She secured a temporary position as wrapper in a department store, with the understanding that she would be dropped after Christmas.

She spent Christmas day alone in her room—a small, bare attic, for she could no longer afford the comforts of a boarding house. She would have liked to go to the movies, but with no prospect of work, and not any too much money on hand, she dared not risk the expense.

All during the following week she looked for work, but could find none; for everywhere places were discharging, instead of taking on, girls.

And then the new year brought her the letter from Marjorie!

Marjorie had pictured Frieda now as a sullen, successful, working-girl, ready to scorn any advances on her part. She dreaded lest the girl would tear up the letter before she read it. But she never thought of her hugging and kissing it, as a veritable bond between her and the rest of mankind.

Frieda read the letter over and over, gradually developing a plan. She would go back to Trenton, get work if possible, and save to buy back the canoe.

Then, when it was paid for, and she had enough money, she would paddle back to Miss Allen's, return the fifteen dollars and beg the forgiveness of Marjorie and the rest of the Scouts. The thought of beginning all over again inspired her with happiness—the first real happiness she had felt since her arrival in New York!

She next discovered a way to go to Trenton by trolley; and accordingly, the next morning she paid her bill and started off. For the time being, she seemed to have forgotten Ruth Henry; all that she thought of was how Marjorie Wilkinson would receive her when she finally saw her.

She reached Trenton in the afternoon, and hunted a room. Fortunately, she still had enough money to pay in advance. Leaving her belongings, she set out in the direction of the boat-houses, to ascertain whether the canoe was still there. But on her way she passed a large mill, before the entrance of which hung a sign, "Girls Wanted;" and without a moment's hesitation she went in, and secured trial employment.

With a light heart, she crossed the bridge to the other side of the river. Walking down a short distance, she espied several old men along the shore.

"There he is!" she thought, as she caught sight of the white beard that had attracted her before. She looked around expectantly for the canoe, but did not see it among the boats.

"Good afternoon!" she said pleasantly, adopting the manner she had been taught to use in the restaurant. "Several months ago I sold you my canoe. I wonder if I could buy it back at the same price?"

The man eyed her narrowly, while his mouth curled into a snarl.

"Your canoe, eh? *Your* canoe! I happen to know you stole that canoe—it never was yours!"

The girl recoiled as if he had struck her. How could he know? Were policemen on her trail? She shuddered with apprehension. Then, drawing herself up with dignity, she inquired haughtily,

"And from who did you get your information?"

"A gal and two boys in an auto stopped here to fix a puncture, and suddenly the gal seen the canoe, and recognized it. 'Where'd you get that?' she asked.

"'Some gal paddled up here in it and sold it,' I replied.

"'Wal it weren't her'n to sell,' the gal says. 'She's nuthin' but a common thief—that's what she is!'

"And she paid me five dollars to save it for her, and the next day they drove up with more money, and took it away.

"Now, I ain't sayin' nuthin' on you, but I advise you not to talk about *your* canoe no more!"

"Oh, indeed!" said Frieda, scarcely able to choke

back the tears. And, turning hastily around, she walked over to the bridge.

But she could never go back to the Scouts now; she as a "common thief;" she had better stay and work alone!

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE SLEIGH RIDE

THE first Scout meeting after the girls returned from the holidays was teeming with excitement. Ruth Henry reported that she had found the canoe; and received, to her delight, great applause. Marjorie revealed what she knew about Frieda, omitting to tell about the letter she wrote to the girl; and Miss Phillips informed them that they still had three hundred dollars in the treasury.

"Now for the new patrols," she announced; "I know you are all interested. The three girls with the highest Scout standing, besides Edith Evans who will continue to act as Lieutenant, are Marjorie Wilkinson, Helen Stewart, and Ruth Henry. Ethel Todd came fourth; if we should get enough girls for a new patrol, she would be the leader."

When the clapping had subsided, these girls, with their Captain, withdrew to choose patrol members. Ruth smiled; it was funny that she and Marjorie who were rivals in everything, ever since they had

come to Miss Allen's, should again be opposed to each other.

The patrol leaders chose their members, not so much for their ability as for their personality. For this reason, Helen Stewart's patrol included the five senior Scouts, Vivien VanSciver, and two freshmen—Florence Evans and her room-mate, Mildred Cavin. Marjorie's included Lily, Ethel, Frances, Marian, Doris, Alice Endicott, and Daisy Gravers. And Ruth's, of course, comprised her own following: Ada Mearns, Barbara Hill, Mae VanHorn, Evelyn Hopkins and three girls she did not know so well—Anna Cane, Dorothy Whitcomb, and Gladys Staley.

As soon as the patrols were announced, Miss Phillips talked to them about keeping up the standards of each patrol: promptness, industry in Scout work, etc., saying that whichever patrol won the highest standing by the end of the year would be senior patrol the next year. For the present, Helen's division was to have this honor.

"For two months now," continued the Captain, after the excitement had died down, "we shall do nothing but Scout work. Each girl is to prepare for the next test higher up.

"And, of course, you have not forgotten the trip to Washington. During spring vacation, I shall take the first eight girls who have passed their first-class test; so I want you all to get to work. All the girls

who were in the troop last year, and are now second-class Scouts, are eligible. All who went to camp passed the first-aid division of the examination; they are not required to take that over again. I should, therefore, advise the following Scouts to get to work:

“Edith Evans, Elsie Lorimer, Emily Rankin, Mary Ridgeway, Frances Wright, Ethel Todd, Marian Guard, Ada Mearns, Lily Andrews, Ruth Henry, Doris Sands, Marjorie Wilkinson.

“I wish I could take all twelve,” she concluded; “but I suppose it’s more fun because of the competition.”

“I’m going to stay up every night, all night!” declared Ruth; “just studying to pass!”

“So long as you don’t kidnap any more children, Ruth, you’re all right!” tantalized Ada, who could never forget Ruth’s vain attempt the previous summer to pass the first-class examination.

Dismissing the subject, Miss Phillips remarked,

“You know, Miss Martin wanted our troop to come over and demonstrate Scouting early in the fall, but I wouldn’t go until we had three patrols. Then, on account of the rush of Christmas time, we put it off until after the new year. So—be prepared for a shock—we are going to-morrow afternoon!”

“To-morrow afternoon!” echoed Ethel. “But Captain——”



"I know, Ethel; I realize I am asking a great deal. But listen to my reasons:

"First, the date suits Miss Martin; second, it suits Mr. Remington and the Boy Scouts; and third, it's going to snow."

The girls listened in open-mouthed amazement to these reasons. What could the Boy Scouts, Mr. Remington, and the condition of the weather—especially a stormy one—have to do with a trip to Miss Martin's? But no one uttered a sound; the girls simply waited for an explanation, for they all thought they had not heard their Captain correctly.

Miss Phillips evidently enjoyed their consternation, for she made no attempt to explain.

"Can everybody go?" she asked.

"*Must* everybody go, Captain?" asked Ethel. "I had another engagement——"

"Oh, if there is anything you can't break, like a dentist appointment——"

"No, it's social!"

"Then you must choose for yourself. We should love to have you, but we can get along without anyone except the three patrol leaders. But I am pretty sure I can guarantee you a good time."

"I know it will be!" cried Ruth, her eyes dancing with anticipation. "Don't we just remember how lovely all our Captain's other surprises turned out to be?"

In the end, Ethel, as well as everybody else, de-

cided to go. The mention of a snowstorm and of the Boy Scouts proved too alluring to pass by.

"Wear your Scout suits, take sweaters, and wear woolen caps and heavy coats," Miss Phillips directed.

The weather man's prediction of snow was correct, for when the girls awakened on Saturday morning, they found everything white. By the time lunch was over, however, it had completely stopped snowing, and the paths were comparatively clear.

The girls gathered expectantly in the hall, dressed according to their Captain's directions.

"Are we going to hike?" asked Frances, looking about in vain for Miss Phillips.

The jingle of sleighbells in front of the door gave an answer to this question. Rushing outside, the girls beheld two sleighs, big enough to carry all the troop. Miss Phillips herself was already seated in the front of one of them, beside the driver, and was enjoying to the full the Scouts' rapturous surprise.

"Now we understand about the snow!" cried Frances, jumping up eagerly beside the Captain. "But where do the Boy Scouts come in?"

"They don't come in the sleigh at all," laughed Miss Phillips; "there wouldn't be room!"

The girls knew it was no use to try to satisfy their curiosity by asking their Captain questions. So they gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the ride.

The air was now clear and bracing, the country

beautiful, and the sleighs seemed to fly along. Lily Andrews, who had always lived in New York City, and one or two others, had never experienced the sensation before; the smooth, gliding motion filled them with delight. All too soon the hour passed, and they reached Miss Martin's.

"I wish it were twice as far!" cried Marjorie. Then, catching sight of some girls of the other school, she changed her tone and called out a greeting.

Miss Martin's whole school turned out to welcome them; they invited them into their parlors, where steaming cocoa and cinnamon toast were served. The girls were hungry, and, in spite of their protestations, somewhat cold; but they soon warmed themselves before the cheerful fireplaces and drank the hot cocoa.

It was nearly four o'clock when they began their demonstration. There had been no special preparation; Miss Phillips announced that she would call for events as she thought of them.

She summoned different girls for signalling, first-aid, knot-tying, resuscitation, etc., including all the Scouts in the recitation of the laws and pledge. To no girl did she give any special distinction and on account of this Ruth was disappointed. She had hoped that Miss Phillips would single out the Patrol leaders and place them in a position of honor above all the others. Marjorie was well known to

all the girls at Miss Martin's because of her brilliant athletic record; Ruth wished the girls to know that she was equally important. But Miss Phillips never mentioned them.

As soon as the little celebration was over, the girls took the Scouts over the school. Miss Martin's seminary was very much like Miss Allen's, although not so progressive, or of quite so high a standard. More of the latter's graduates attended colleges; but it was both older and larger than Miss Martin's.

"You'll find that you never made a mistake in starting a troop," remarked Miss Phillips, after she had explained a great many details to Miss Watson, who was to be Captain. "And it will be lots of fun for the two schools. I have my plans all ready for this summer, but perhaps next summer both troops could go to an organized camp together."

"What are we going to do this summer?" asked Ruth, who had overheard part of the conversation.

"Wait and see!" replied Miss Phillips, mysteriously. "You will know pretty soon!"

Regarding this almost as a rebuke, Ruth muttered disagreeably,

"Just so we don't waste any more money on thieves, I'll be satisfied," and turned away.

Miss Phillips did not overhear the remark, but Marjorie did, and it brought tears to her eyes.

"Say, Ruth," she remarked, rather tartly, "why don't you win that medal catching Frieda?"

Ruth shrugged her shoulders.

"I did more than anybody else by finding the canoe," she replied. "I guess nobody else has a better claim to the medal than I have!"

After an early supper, the Scouts wrapped up warmly again, and climbed merrily into the sleighs, bound, as they surmised, toward Miss Allen's. The horses had been fed and rested; the snow on the road was packed hard; the stars twinkled brightly, and the whole world glistened in the star-light. But the ride was shorter than before, for after half an hour the horses turned into a big gate. They were entering the grounds of Episcopal Academy, the home of the Boy Scouts!

Before they had pulled up to a standstill, the doors were thrown open by the boys, who were uttering great shouts of welcome. The girls jumped joyfully to the ground.

"The Girl Scouts don't know what they're here for," laughed Miss Phillips, while they were removing their wraps. "They think it's a party!"

"Isn't it?" asked Marjorie, quite distressed.

"For some of the girls, but not for you!" replied the Captain, significantly. "All the Scouts who wish to qualify for first-class test are to take signalling with Mr. Remington. The rest of us will stay here for games."

"Oh!" exclaimed Ruth, sinking down in her chair. "How could you, Captain?"

"Why didn't you warn us?" demanded Ethel.

"I didn't want to make you nervous, or to spoil this afternoon's ride. Now listen while I read the names of the girls who are to take the test." And she proceeded to read the list of girls whom she had previously announced as qualified. "I would like those twelve girls," she concluded, "to follow Mr. Remington to his office."

Marjorie arose with the others, and did as her Captain directed; but with each step that took her nearer to the place of the examination, she felt herself losing courage.

"Your handbook requires that you be able to send and receive semaphore at the rate of thirty-two letters a minute," said Mr. Remington, when they were all finally seated in the Boy Scout room; "but Miss Phillips tells me the requirement has been lowered by National Headquarters to sixteen. I shall, therefore, pass all of the girls who can receive at the latter rate, but shall later test to see whether anyone can make the higher record."

He proceeded to give the required examinations in both the semaphore and the Morse codes, making them strict, as Miss Phillips had directed. Only four of the twelve girls passed on both codes—Edith Evans, Ruth Henry, Ethel Todd, and Marjorie Wilkinson. And, to Mr. Remington's amazement, all of these girls passed the more difficult standard of thirty-two letters a minute!

"I think you have all earned a chance to dance!" he said, leading the way back to the big parlor where the rest of the young people were enjoying themselves.

And Marjorie and Ruth both danced with happy hearts, for they felt that the most difficult part of their first-class test was behind them, and their trip to Washington practically assured.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE TRIP TO WASHINGTON

MISS PHILLIPS had feared that more than eight girls would qualify as first-class Scouts, and that, therefore, some would be disappointed at not being included in the Washington trip; but she found that, as the weeks went by, fewer girls than she had anticipated became eligible. Under the rigid standards of the new handbook it was no easy matter to become a first-class Scout. It was true that four girls had successfully passed the signalling, but of these four, only Ruth had made an acceptable map. For this reason it came about, just as she desired, that she was the first Scout of Pansy troop to receive that honor.

When she was presented with the badge at the following Scout meeting, she made no pretense at modesty. With a self-satisfied air, she strutted forward in answer to her Captain's summons. "*The* first-class Scout of Pansy troop!" her manner announced, as plainly as if she had uttered the very words.



“And I’ll be the first Golden Eaglet!” she resolved, as she returned after the presentation. For it was characteristic of Ruth Henry that she always kept a goal in view.

Early in February, Marjorie, Edith, and Ethel fulfilled the requirements and received their badges, outwardly more humbly, though secretly they were as proud as Ruth. Their finer sensibilities, however, kept them from openly gloating.

Two more weeks went by, and all the while Miss Phillips grew increasingly anxious. The money was provided for eight; the opportunity was precious! Would she be obliged to take only four girls because all the other twenty Scouts, members of her own troop, were too lazy or too stupid to pass the test? The idea was distasteful; at every meeting she urged them on to increased activity.

A week later, she was partially rewarded, for Frances Wright and Lily Andrews became first-class Scouts. Now Marjorie was happy; she could not imagine a trip of this sort without her beloved roommate. Lily, however, was a plodder, and while she was never among the foremost ranks, it was seldom that she was left out altogether.

“And now if we could only get Doris!” remarked Marjorie, when she and Lily were privately celebrating the latter’s victory. “The party wouldn’t be complete without her.”

“She made a marvelous map at camp,” com-

mented Lily. "I wonder what is keeping her back?"

"Signaling, I think. I say, Lil, couldn't we just make her practice till she passes? We have two weeks yet!"

"Great idea, Marj!" agreed her room-mate; and the two girls hurried off that very minute to put the plan into action.

Doris accepted the help gratefully, and practiced the letters steadily until her ability had so materially improved that she felt qualified to take the test. To the infinite satisfaction of all concerned, she passed—two days before the girls were scheduled to leave. And, at the same time, Helen Stewart fulfilled the requirements and brought the party to the desired number of nine.

The girls preferred not to wear their Scout uniforms on the train, but carried them along in case they might need them for some official occasion. Miss Phillips said that she rather hoped there might be a Scout rally while they were there, thus affording them a chance to meet other Girl Scouts.

"How do you want to room?" she asked, as they were waiting in the station. "A letter from the hotel says that there are three bed-rooms and a bath together on one side of the hall, and two—one is a single room for me—on the other. Now who is rooming with whom?"

"Marj and I are together!" cried Lily, proudly.

"Frances and I," announced Ethel Todd.

"Doris and I," said Ruth.

"So Edith and Helen must be," laughed Miss Phillips. "Well, that works out very well. Now she wants to come across the hall with me, and who wants to stay on the other side?"

"Oh, let Lil and me be with you!" exclaimed Marjorie, eagerly; and as she was the first to speak for the honor, none of the others protested.

With the exception of Edith and Miss Phillips, none of the party had ever visited Washington before, and the trip from the start was filled with interest. The girls watched everything out of the window, and laughed and chatted all the way. Since it was vacation, and a party, Miss Phillips permitted candy, and before they had gone very far Lily produced a beautiful box which her father had sent to her that very day.

They reached the hotel in time for dinner Thursday evening. The rooms, with their soft carpets, their luxurious chairs, pretty electric lights and comfortable beds were a novelty to most of the Scouts.

Sitting at the hotel table, listening to the music while they ate, and ordering from the menu cards, proved a delightful experience. The girls could scarcely eat, so interested were they in looking around the big dining-room, watching the people, and now and then catching sight of themselves in the many mirrors about the walls; and all the while con-

scious of the delicate odor of roses and the swinging rhythm of the music.

"I think it would be fun enough to stay in a hotel for three days," remarked Ethel, sipping her consommé, "without doing another single thing!"

"But our friend and benefactor wouldn't be satisfied with that," remarked Miss Phillips. "We are to see and learn things as well."

"Oh, please tell us who it is!" cried Ruth, almost swallowing her olive in her haste to satisfy her curiosity.

"I dare not! I promised!"

"My, how you do love mysteries, Captain!" observed Ethel.

"Is it a man?" pursued Ruth.

Miss Phillips hesitated. "Yes, it is. I'll tell you that much. And I'll tell you something more. He has promised to equip the girls for a canoe trip this summer, if they win the Pioneer badge!"

"A canoe trip!" repeated Marjorie. "Oh, how wonderful!"

"It will be a nice change from regular camping," said Miss Phillips. "But the pioneer test is a difficult one."

The girls discussed it for a while, and, after supper was over, went up to their rooms. They were too tired even to go to the movies, but Miss Phillips had brought cards, and they played a rubber of bridge before seeking their beds.

They were up early the next morning to find the dining-room almost empty. Again they had the fun of ordering "the things we don't get at Miss Allen's," as they themselves put it, and the meal passed pleasantly.

Most of the day was spent in sight-seeing. They visited the White House, and the Capitol; stopped at the Smithsonian Institute and laughed over the dresses the Presidents' wives had worn; took the elevator to the top of Washington Monument; and, after luncheon, rode to Mt. Vernon. It meant a great deal to them to see all the places they had read so much about.

They came back to the hotel tired; but a bath, fifteen minutes' rest, and fresh clothing, revived them; and at dinner they were as gay as usual. In the evening they went to the theater.

On Saturday they took a sight-seeing bus about the city and ended up at the Girl Scout Headquarters.

All of the girls were tremendously excited as they walked into the office; it was the first time they had ever met other officers, or visited any Scout office. Fortunately, Miss Phillips had insisted this time that they all wear their Scout uniforms, and in these they felt more at ease.

Instead of finding only one or two officials, the place was crowded with them. The girls stepped back shyly, while Miss Phillips made the advances.

"We are Girl Scouts from Miss Allen's Boarding School—in Pennsylvania," she explained; "we're seeing Washington, and, of course, we couldn't miss the Girl Scout Headquarters."

The hostesses were most cordial, showing the girls everything, and then inviting them to a big rally that afternoon.

"That reminds me," remarked one of the officers, who was evidently a representative from National Headquarters in New York City, "I have a list of Girl Scouts here, from all parts of the country, who want to correspond with other Girl Scouts. Would you girls, any of you, like to take some names?"

Marjorie was the first to accept the suggestion. "Oh, I would!" she cried. "That would be lots of fun!"

The officer handed the list to her, and the girls all crowded about to read the names, hoping that perhaps they might come across one that they knew. But, recognizing none, they selected at random, while Marjorie placed checks here and there in the list.

While she was still thus occupied, her eye fell suddenly upon a name which seemed familiar. It aroused a vague sort of expectation within her, as of some old association. Where had she heard it before: "Jennie Perkins," Trenton, N. J.?

She wrinkled her brows for a moment, lost in thought. But her uncertainty lasted only a second;

in a flash, the significance of it dawned upon her. That was the assumed name under which Frieda Hammer must have worked at that Fifth Avenue tea-room! Could this girl—evidently a Scout, and living in Trenton—possibly be Frieda? Marjorie's heart leaped for joy, but she resolutely put down her hopes. The whole thing was most improbable. The girl might easily return to Trenton in quest of work, but Marjorie knew that her former dislike of their troop, particularly of Ruth Henry, would prejudice her against ever becoming a Girl Scout. And Frieda Hammer had never showed any signs of sociability; she was the last girl in the world to desire to make new friends by writing to unknown correspondents.

Still, Marjorie decided, she might as well select this name as any, for all were unknown to her. She had nothing whatever to lose, and there was one chance in a thousand that "Jennie Perkins" might be Frieda. Hastily making a check beside the name, she returned the list to the officer.

Although Miss Phillips had intended to take the girls home after luncheon, she changed her mind at their entreaties, and allowed them to remain for the rally.

It was a magnificent sight to behold hundreds of Girl Scouts, all dressed in uniform, gather together in the great hall, and to hear them join, as in one voice, in the pledge to the flag and the oath of the organization. More than one of the members of

Pansy troop felt a tightening sensation at their throats when the great throng of girls sang the "Star Spangled Banner." The meeting brought to them an impression that they would never forget, and prepared them in one way to realize what it would mean to be part of a great organized camp.

They left the hall as soon as the address was over, in order that they might make an early train home; for, instead of returning to Miss Allen's school, each girl was to go to her own home, and Miss Phillips was anxious that they all reach their destinations before dark.

The rally had been the most fitting conclusion that Miss Phillips could have conceived. She realized this when she saw how deeply it had impressed the girls.

"A glorious end of a glorious trip!" said Ethel enthusiastically, as they got into the train.

And the shining eyes of the others confirmed their approval of her opinion.



## CHAPTER XXI

## LETTERS

MARJORIE could hardly wait until she reached home, so excited was she about writing to the unknown Girl Scout. It would be a difficult matter, too, for she wanted to write a general letter, and yet one which, if Jennie Perkins should by any chance turn out to be Frieda Hammer, would be appropriate.

The family were all so glad to see her and so anxious to hear about the trip, that she at once gave up the idea of writing that night. Of course, her mother would expect her to go to church the following day; but after Sunday School she would undoubtedly be free.

But again her hopes were frustrated. Ruth sought her immediately after class and walked home with her.

"Let's go for a walk, Marj," she said. "Harold's coming over for me at your house, and I thought maybe Jack would go, too."

Marjorie frowned slightly; she did not particu-

larly enjoy Harold Mason's society, and she did so long to write that letter. But she did not care to disclose any of her plans to Ruth; she had no desire to encounter her ridicule.

"All right; if we don't stay out late. I asked mother to have an early supper, for I want to write letters to-night!"

"John Hadley?" teased Ruth. "By the way, Harold knows him. He goes to Princeton, too, now."

"He does! You never told me——"

"I never thought you were particularly interested in Harold Mason, Marj!"

"Only as your friend, Ruth," laughed Marjorie.

The walk, just as Marjorie anticipated, was not particularly interesting to her. Ruth monopolized the conversation, succeeding in keeping both boys entertained by giving it a decidedly personal flavor. As Marjorie was almost entirely left out, she became bored, and grew impatient to get back. At last, when they were home, she told her mother she was going to lock herself in her room that evening to avoid disturbance.

It was only after a great many attempts that she produced a letter which met with her own satisfaction. She wanted it to be long enough, yet not too long; appropriate for any Girl Scout, and also, if Jennie Perkins should turn out to be Frieda, applicable and friendly towards the runaway.

"I'm just going to send this," she thought; "there's no use writing it over."

She held it up, however, and read it through for the third time.

"DEAR JENNIE,

"I hope you will excuse my using your first name right at the beginning, but since we are both Girl Scouts—really sisters, you know—I think it would be nice to get well acquainted right away!

"What kind of a troop do you belong to? What is your flower name? And how many girls are there in it? It just seems as if I want to ask a million questions at once, but I will try to wait patiently till you answer.

"Our Captain, Miss Phillips,—she is simply wonderful—took eight of us first-class Scouts to Washington for three days. We had a perfect time, lived in a big hotel, and saw all the sights and Saturday morning we went to the Scout office and it was there that I got your name so we could correspond.

"And that reminds me, did you ever live in New York? I knew a girl—or rather I knew of her—and her name was the same as yours, who lived there once.

"We went camping last year and had the loveliest time! If I ever meet you, I will tell you all about it but it would take too long in a letter. Next year

our Captain says maybe we will take a canoe trip! Wouldn't that be fun?

"I am crazy to hear about where you go to school and what class you're in! I'm a sophomore and I go to Miss Allen's boarding school.

"We have another week of vacation here at home so I wish you would write to this address before I go back to school. Then I'll try to answer promptly, too.

"Your Sister Scout,  
"MARJORIE WILKINSON."

After the letter was posted, Marjorie waited breathlessly for an answer. She watched for the postman faithfully, refusing to go away from the house when he was due. But three days passed by without her hearing a word.

On the fourth day, she became so restless and nervous that her mother noticed that something was wrong, and asked what the trouble was.

"Nothing, only I'm corresponding with a Girl Scout in Trenton, and I hoped I'd get a letter before I go back. And to-morrow's Friday—there are only two days left."

Mrs. Wilkinson gazed searchingly at her daughter. Marjorie had always been truthful, but this explanation did not sound plausible. Girls did not usually get so worked up over letters from other

girls whom they had never seen. That part of the explanation was true, she knew; for Marjorie could not conceal her eagerness for the postman, and her depression when she received nothing. But Mrs. Wilkinson feared that her interest had something to do with John Hadley, and she sighed. Marjorie was too young to care seriously for anyone yet.

But Friday morning's mail brought the coveted letter. Marjorie seized it eagerly and ran off with it to her own room. Assuredly, it would tell her something about Frieda!

The handwriting was a trifle cruder than that of most girls of her own age, but she hardly noticed that. Feverishly, she tore open the envelope, and read,

"DEAR MARJORIE,

"I was very glad to receive your letter so soon, hardly hoping anyone would want to correspond right now. I guess when you hear that I am a mill girl you will not want to correspond. I have worked in Trenton going on four months now and I like it very much. I go to night school and there I met my girl friend and we started the Scouts here. I am only a tenderfoot now, hoping to be a second-class Scout before summer. Our troop never went camping yet. We are too poor.

"Hoping that you will still want to write to me even though I do work, I am yours truly,

"JENNIE PERKINS."

"But she doesn't say whether she ever lived in New York, or where she comes from!" cried Marjorie, in despair. "I'm just as much in the dark as ever!

"I'll just have to get it out of her, bit by bit. And maybe, even if she isn't Frieda Hammer, Pansy troop could help her a whole lot."

So Marjorie decided to write to her again immediately, telling her more about the troop, their hikes, and their good times. She posted the letter Saturday morning. She knew, of course, that she and Ruth were taking the Sunday train to Miss Allen's.

As they entered the main hall, Ruth remarked that they might as well stop in the post-office.

"We probably won't get anything," she said; "but somebody might have written here."

Marjorie's heart bounded with sudden joy when she beheld a letter in her own mail-box. It was registered, too; evidently the post-mistress had signed for it. Seizing it hastily, she looked expectantly at the postmark. Her hopes fell; it was stamped "New York." She was disappointed at this fact, but nevertheless she opened the letter eagerly; for school girls do not receive registered letters every day.

The first thing that caught her eye was a well-known greenback.

"Money!" she cried. "Look, Ruth—twenty—thirty—thirty-five dollars!"

"Who from?" asked Ruth, with surprise.

Marjorie turned the paper over in which the bills were enclosed, and discovered some writing, which she proceeded to read aloud, while Ruth listened with increasing amazement:

"From Frieda Hammer for canoe and carfare belonging to M. Wilkinson and Pansy troop Girl Scouts."

"And postmarked New York!" repeated Marjorie, not knowing whether to be glad or sorry at its receipt. For she rejoiced that Frieda had paid back the Scouts' money, but all her hopes of her unknown correspondent being Frieda were dashed to the ground. For, undoubtedly, she concluded, the girl was still in New York!

## CHAPTER XXII

## THE PIONEER BADGE

"I DO not believe our benefactor, whoever he is, picked out the hardest test in Scouting," remarked Ruth, as Captain Phillips finished explaining the requirements.

"I agree with you, Ruth," assented Miss Phillips. "But we shall have a hike every Saturday night during April to study and practice the different requirements. The final hike, to learn how to build a lean-to, will be to the Boy Scouts' cabin; for they are going to teach us.

"Now," she concluded, "there is one thing more I want to talk about—and that is the money we have in the treasury. Counting what Frieda Hammer just returned to Marjorie, there is about three hundred dollars—a little more, perhaps. That is a lot of money for a troop like ours. And since we earned it to use for our 'Good Turn,' I don't think it would be right for us to spend it upon ourselves. But what do you all think?"

"I agree with you perfectly, Captain," said Edith



Evans. "Just because one plan failed, that is no reason why the troop should stop all of its good work. I suggest that a committee be appointed to visit the local charity organization, and find out where assistance is most needed."

But before anyone else could speak, Marjorie jumped to her feet.

"Captain, are we sure that we have failed with Frieda? Doesn't the very fact that she returned the things she took, of her own free will, show that wherever she is, she is progressing? You all know that the Frieda Hammer we knew at camp would not have considered it wrong to steal, or would even have thought of returning the goods! So it's just possible, don't you think, that she may turn up? Couldn't we wait just a little bit longer?"

Lily and Doris, who both knew how close the project was to Marjorie's heart, spoke in favor of waiting until the first of June.

"That will still leave us time to spend the money before the seniors, who helped to earn it as much as any of us, leave," put in Ethel, who usually took sides with Marjorie in a discussion.

Ruth said nothing; she knew it would be of no avail. For by this time she was beginning to realize Marjorie's popularity, and considered it more discreet not to oppose her openly.

Accordingly, Marjorie got her way. She had two months left in which to trace Frieda, and, if she

found her, to offer her a new chance. The whole affair had grown to be an obsession with her; it seemed as if she desired it more than anything else in the world.

It was still very cold when the first Saturday in April arrived; but Miss Phillips told the girls to be prepared to hike, no matter what the weather might be. Early in the afternoon they started off, well fortified against the cold.

"We are going to the cabin to-day," announced the Captain, as they walked along in a group. "Mr. Remington and two of the boys will be there to give us a lesson in the use of an axe."

"Which two boys?" asked Doris innocently, betraying the fact that she was more interested in the boys than in learning woodcraft.

Everybody laughed.

"I won't tell you!" replied Miss Phillips, ever mysterious; and each girl secretly hoped it was the boy she liked best.

"It certainly is cold for April," remarked Ethel.

"Yes; it's an east wind, too," observed Miss Phillips. "And in this part of the country, that means rain."

"How do you know it's an east wind, Captain?" asked Marjorie.

"Well, I happen to know that we are walking towards the north, and since I can feel it blowing against me on the right side, I naturally know it to

be an east wind," explained the Captain. "If I didn't know which direction is north, I couldn't tell an east wind from a west wind. But I can tell you how to determine which quarter the wind is from when it is not blowing strong enough to feel it against you. There are several simple ways: one is to watch the way smoke travels; another is to note the movement of the tree-tops. But sometimes you have neither smoke nor trees at hand; then the best method is to put your forefinger in your mouth and moisten it, and hold it up in the air: the side which feels coolest is the side the wind is blowing on. I've never known that way to fail, in my own experience, even when there did not seem to be a breath of air stirring."

All the girls who heard this description, immediately stuck their fingers into their mouths and then held them in the air, to try it.

"Mine feels the same temperature all the way around," observed Ruth.

"Oh, that is because there is too much wind to-day," replied Miss Phillips. "You can really tell better by that method when the wind is just perceptible, than when it is strong."

They reached the trolley line, upon which they rode for several miles, and then hiked the remaining distance. It was not yet three o'clock when they arrived at the cabin.

"Hurray for the Girl Scouts!" shouted a familiar

voice, and Dick Roberts and Marjorie's brother Jack flung open the wooden door. Mr. Remington, behind them, echoed a more dignified welcome.

"Did you bring the axe?" asked Marjorie.

The Scoutmaster pointed to a leather sheath, fastened to his belt.

"Here's my *Plumb*," he said; "it's the official Boy Scout axe. I always carry it when we go into the woods."

"But, Captain Phillips," protested Doris, "you surely don't expect us to wear those things in our belts, do you?"

"Not at teas and on shopping expeditions!" laughed Miss Phillips; and the girls smiled at the idea of dainty Doris Sands decorated with such a deadly weapon on her person. A bunch of violets seemed more appropriate for her adornment.

Mr. Remington asked the girls to pay close attention while he explained the general rules and precautions in the use of the axe. At intervals during his talk, he called for demonstrations, first by Jack and then by Dick, until all the important points had been emphasized.

"And now for volunteers!" he called, when his brief discourse was finished.

Ruth Henry stepped forward bravely.

"It's pretty sharp," said Jack, handing the axe to her carefully.

Ruth picked it up, and lifted it boldly to her shoul-

der. Keeping her eye on a certain spot in the log at which Mr. Remington directed her to aim, she swung the axe too quickly. Her effort was good, but her grasp not sufficiently tight; the tool slipped from her hand and fell swiftly to the ground, missing her foot by only an inch or two.

"Ruth! Do be careful!" shrieked Doris. "Oh, I know we'll kill ourselves!"

"No, you won't," said Mr. Remington, reassuringly. "Now, rest a minute, and then try again."

This time, although she wielded the axe awkwardly, she managed to hit her mark.

All that afternoon the Girl Scouts resolutely stuck to their task, until their hands became sore and blistered, and their shoulders ached from the exercise. Finally, Mr. Remington called to them to stop, complimenting them upon their perseverance.

"But you will need a great deal more practice before you attempt to build the shack and the fireplace," he concluded.

"I thought we would go out the next two Saturdays and practice what you have taught us," said Miss Phillips; "and in the meantime, I will give the rest of the Pioneer test. Then, the last Saturday in April, I will bring all of the girls that have successfully passed the other requirements, to try out in this."

"Very good," replied Mr. Remington. "The plan suits me. Let me know how many girls you expect

to have, and I'll bring the same number of boys, and we'll make a picnic of it."

"And you girls all work hard!" said Jack, "for we want a big crowd. The more the merrier!"

And, indeed, the Girl Scouts meant to work hard, for the passing of the Pioneer test carried with it such a wonderful reward. Even the new girls, who had all successfully passed their second-class tests by that time, threw themselves wholeheartedly into the effort. The days flew swiftly by; all too soon, it seemed to the girls who did not consider themselves sufficiently prepared, the time for the announcement of those eligible for the final test arrived. Of the twenty-four girls in the troop, there were a number who had no expectation of being included among the list, for one reason or another. Among this group were several of the seniors, who expected to work during the summer, and, therefore, did not try to pass the test; and several of the newer girls had found the effort beyond them.

Miss Phillips felt, however, that she had reason to be proud of the number of candidates who had qualified thus far. She read the list at the Scout meeting on the Friday evening preceeding the final hike and picnic with the Boy Scouts.

"I wish that we might include everybody," she said; "but I realize that would be impossible. However, I congratulate the following girls:

"Edith Evans, Helen Stewart, Frances Wright,

Ethel Todd, Marian Guard, Ada Mearns, Lily Andrews, Ruth Henry, Doris Sands, Marjorie Wilkinson, Anna Cane, Evelyn Hopkins, Florence Evans, Alice Endicott, Mildred Cavin.

"Of course," added Miss Phillips, "this does not mean that you will all fifteen pass the Pioneer test. Indeed, the worst is yet to come. But the final decision rests with Mr. Remington."

The following day was mild and warm, and the girls were all in the highest spirits. Arriving at the cabin, fifteen Boy Scouts greeted them noisily, asking them provoking questions about the shack they intended to build, vainly endeavoring to catch them. But the girls were well prepared, and more or less confident of success.

"I never saw such progress," commented Mr. Remington, as he set the girls to work. "Why, with a hundred years' practice, they might turn out to be as good as my boys!"

"Mr. Remington," said Ruth, as she paused for a moment after putting a stick in position, "won't you please remove these troublesome insects? They retard my progress!"

"Insects!" repeated the Scoutmaster; "do you mean ants?"

"No," laughed Ruth; "big insects! Boys!"

"All right! Suppose you boys all go and collect stones for the fireplace, so that the girls can set to work at that as soon as they finish their lean-tos!"

"And won't we get a minute to rest?" asked Ada, lazily. She was beginning to be tired already.

"Rest!" exclaimed Mr. Remington; "you surely didn't come here for that! But you can take it easy at supper, for the boys are going to prepare the whole meal for you."

It was almost dark when the weary Girl Scouts gathered about the fireplace where the supper was to be eaten. Never did a meal taste so good, for the girls thought they had never been so tired or so hungry before. They talked little, but they were quite content. The lean-tos and the fireplace were all finished; they were now enjoying not only the satisfaction of achievement, but the anticipation of their great reward: the summer's canoe trip. No wonder they were happy!

"Can't you tell us who passed?" begged Ruth, as they were finishing their cookies.

But Mr. Remington shook his head.

"I don't know myself, Ruth," he replied. "I gave certain marks for certain things. I shall have to add the averages up at home, and send the list to Miss Phillips."

"Then we'll know to-morrow?" pursued Ruth.

"You'll know at Scout meeting next Friday!" declared Miss Phillips, in the tone which everyone knew to be final.



## CHAPTER XXIII

## THE TRIP TO TRENTON

WHEN Marjorie thought of what the passing of the Pioneer test would mean to her, she felt that nothing could bring her more happiness than to hear her own and Lily's name read from the list by their Captain at Scout meeting that night. But when she perceived an attractive little envelope in her mail that evening, and when she saw upon examination that the postmark was Princeton, she experienced an even greater thrill of anticipation.

The envelope proved to contain an invitation from John Hadley for his club dance at Princeton. Marjorie uttered a little squeal of joy, and wished that Lily were there to hear of her good fortune.

She turned around quickly, for someone was entering the office. It was Ruth Henry!

"You look as if you'd struck a gold mine, Marj!" said the other girl. "Whatever has happened?"

"Just a dance invitation. But a very nice one!"

"I seem to have a letter, too!" exclaimed Ruth, always anxious for mail. "I wonder who from!"

"Why, it's the same shape as mine!" cried Marjorie, in astonishment. "Could it possibly be from Princeton?"

"Very likely!" said Ruth, proceeding to open it.

"Do you suppose Harold Mason belongs to the same club as John Hadley?" asked Marjorie.

Laughingly, they put the invitations together. They were identical—the only dissimilarity being the boys' visiting cards.

"What fun!" said Ruth. "It will be so much nicer to go together."

"But how can we go?" demanded Marjorie, her face suddenly sobering. "Miss Allen would never let us."

"We won't ask Miss Allen!" declared Ruth, boldly. "We'll just go home over the week end—it's the second Saturday in May, you know—and ask either of our mothers to chaperone us!"

The girls discussed the plan as they went in to supper. So excited were they that they almost forgot that the list of those who had passed the Pioneer badge would be read at Scout meeting.

But the other girls had not forgotten, and when Miss Phillips realized their nervousness she decided not to delay the proceeding any longer than necessary. Accordingly, as soon as the opening ceremony and preliminary business was over, she made the announcement.

"I am afraid there will be some disappointments,"

she said, "but it could not be helped. You have all been marked fairly, and I am sure you would not want to pass too easily.

"And for the benefit of the girls who can't go on the canoe trip, I want to say that the next summer I intend to take the troop to a big organized camp where there are other Scout troops. And I shall include everyone who wants to go, provided, of course, that she is at least a second-class Scout.

"I congratulate the following girls, and request that they come forward to receive the Pioneer badge:

"Edith Evans, Helen Stewart, Frances Wright, Ethel Todd, Marian Guard, Lily Andrews, Ruth Henry, Marjorie Wilkinson, Doris Sands, Florence Evans, Alice Endicott, Mildred Cavin, Evelyn Hopkins."

Amid the shouts of their companions, the girls stepped up to receive their badges. None of the girls whose names had not been called seemed really disappointed; probably they had all realized that they stood no chance of passing the test. The successful Scouts had earned their reward faithfully; there was no jealousy or envy among the less fortunate.

Marjorie, therefore, was perfectly satisfied with the results. She had lost her own canoe, but she had it back again, and now she was to have a glorious trip during the vacation, accompanied by Lily and Doris, and her beloved Captain. She was thankful,

too, that Ruth had received the badge; for, had she been left out, she might have made things uncomfortable for the girls who had passed.

While Marjorie was waiting for an answer to her letter from her mother, she was surprised to receive a letter from Jennie Perkins. It was just another friendly letter, telling little about herself, and much about her troop and its activities. Marjorie looked immediately for the postmark, and was disappointed to find it again Trenton, and not New York.

"We are going to hike to Princeton next Saturday," she wrote, "and perhaps go through the college. Some of us have uniforms," she added; "and some of us just have to wear our plain clothes. I am in this class for I have not saved enough money yet to buy mine. But I want to get it by June first, as that is my birthday."

Marjorie opened her eyes wide as she read these words; Jennie Perkins would be at Princeton the same day she would—at least if her mother let her go! What should she do? Tell her, and try to meet her? But now that she was almost convinced that Jennie was not Frieda Hammer, she was not so anxious to meet her; and if she were Frieda, under the assumed name, the latter would probably avoid such a meeting.

"I don't believe I'll say anything," she finally decided; "for, even if I were sure I wanted to meet her, how could I tell when I'd get to Princeton?"

And a misunderstanding might spoil a very pleasant correspondence."

Much to Marjorie's joy, Mrs. Wilkinson wrote that she and Mr. Wilkinson would drive the girls to Trenton the afternoon of the dance, and make arrangements to stay at some hotel there over night; and that the boys could call for them there. The plan suited Marjorie perfectly; the arrangement of staying in Trenton meant another hope of meeting Frieda—or, rather, Jennie.

When Saturday came, and Marjorie and Ruth left the school together, it seemed quite like old times; for recently they had not spent much time together. Marjorie and Lily had become inseparable, while Ruth spent her time with many different girls.

When they reached their destination, both girls were surprised to be met, not by members of their own families, but by Harold Mason.

"And when did you come home?" asked Ruth, nevertheless beaming a welcome.

"This morning; and John's with me. We mean to drive you girls over!"

"Isn't it pretty far?" inquired Marjorie, doubtfully. She could hardly take in Harold's words—that John Hadley was actually visiting him. Why had he not driven over to the station to meet them?

Reading Marjorie's thoughts, Harold explained that John was expecting a long-distance call from Trenton.

"His mother is staying there with a friend, and as she is one of the patronesses of the dance she will chaperone you girls. We thought we'd drive over this afternoon and have supper with Mrs. Hadley's friend, and then all go to the dance. And we'll all drive back here afterward—Mrs. Hadley and John are to stay at our house."

"Lovely!" cried Ruth; for this program stretched the party over a longer period than they had anticipated.

Marjorie had not seen John since the previous Thanksgiving and she realized that she was becoming rather excited. When the machine drove up to Mason's, he was on the porch to meet them.

"By George! this is great!" he cried, running down and opening the door of the car. "I'm so glad to see you—both!"

He shook hands with Ruth and Marjorie, and the girls got out of the car, Ruth running in next door to find her mother.

"It was lovely of you to invite me," said Marjorie, a little at a loss regarding what to say after so many months.

"It was wonderful of you to come," he replied, sincerely. A sudden pang of jealousy seized him. What had Marjorie been doing all this time? Had another fellow cut him out? They had exchanged only two or three letters during the whole year, and all of these had been very impersonal.

"If you don't mind," said Marjorie, turning to Harold, "I'd like to go see mother. For I'll be with you people all afternoon and evening."

"Certainly," assented Harold; and John flushed at his own egotism in expecting Marjorie to prefer his society to that of her own family.

A little after two o'clock the Ford sedan again drove up to Wilkinsons', and Marjorie, with her little bag in her hand, appeared. Ruth was already in the front seat with Harold, and John got out and assisted Marjorie into the back seat beside him.

If John Hadley hoped for a *tete-a-tete* with Marjorie, he was greatly disappointed, for both girls seemed to be plotting to keep the conversation general. They asked all about college, and the club, and the dance; Marjorie wanted to hear something about the towns of Trenton and Princeton; and both girls talked animatedly about the summer's canoe trip.

"And we both passed the Pioneer test!" explained Ruth, triumphantly.

"Great!" exclaimed John; and a minute description of the hike and the test followed.

It was not long before they reached Trenton, but before the machine crossed the bridge, it passed a certain dingy little boathouse, and Ruth and Harold exchanged significant glances, unobserved by the occupants of the back seat.

As the car continued along the principal business street, slowing down for traffic, Marjorie noticed a

big building at the corner, from which a great crowd of girls were pouring. As they approached, she realized that some of the costumes were strangely familiar; then in a moment it dawned upon her that they were Girl Scouts!

"Oh, wait, wait!" she demanded, greatly excited. "Please stop! They're Girl Scouts!"

"What if they are?" asked Ruth, coolly, regarding her in disdain. Was Marjorie crazy?

"I want to get out! Oh, please stop!" begged the frantic girl.

Harold obediently pulled up to the curb, although he, too, shared Ruth's opinion. It seemed silly—but it was beyond him to understand a girl.

"Aren't you going to get out, Ruth? Remember our fourth law!"

"Marj, that's silly. Just because we're 'sisters to every other Girl Scout' is no reason why we should get out and make friends with a pack of mill girls!"

"Well, then wait for me!"

And in a flash she was out of the machine and up the steps. Venturing the Girl Scout salute, she asked the girls politely,

"Can anyone tell me whether Jennie Perkins belongs to this troop?" Her voice trembled so that she could hardly speak.

"Yes—she's in the office, waiting for her pay envelope," replied one of the girls. "Turn to the left once you're inside."



Marjorie needed no second invitation; in a second she had pushed open the half-closed door. She stood face to face with Frieda Hammer!

"Frieda!" she cried, rushing to her, and throwing her arms about her neck.

"Marjorie!" sobbed the girl, completely breaking down, and hiding her head upon the other girl's shoulder.

In the brief glimpse that Marjorie had of Frieda, she saw how the girl had changed. Her clothes were neat, and her hair was arranged attractively. Moreover, she looked happy; the old, sullen, distrustful look was gone. She was a real Girl Scout now, and the transformation was marvelous. The miracle was accomplished, though by a far different method from any Marjorie ever dreamed of.

Little by little Frieda told Marjorie the story of her struggle; then of her work here, the Girl Scout troop which she had really started herself, the saving of the money for Marjorie's canoe, which she had had mailed in New York in order to mislead the latter, and finally of her progress at night school.

"Why, it sounds just like a fairy tale," said Marjorie. "Now when will you come back to us?"

"I want to work this summer, and then—if Pansy troop still wants to help me—to go to full-time school in the fall."

"Indeed, we do want to help," said Marjorie passionately. "But you must fulfill one condition:

come to Miss Allen's before May first. After that we were to give you up as lost."

"I will!" agreed Frieda. "Could I come next Saturday afternoon?"

"Yes; it's the day of the Scouts' out-door musical comedy. Promise me?"

"I promise!"

"Need any money for carfare?"

"No, thanks," replied Frieda, laughing. "And I expect to have my uniform by that time. But don't tell a soul that you've seen me, till then!" she entreated.

"Not a soul!" answered Marjorie.

Then, kissing her goodbye, she was gone as suddenly as she had appeared.

"Did you have a nice time, Marj?" asked Ruth, rather disagreeably, as Marjorie climbed into the car again. "You stayed long enough!"

"The best time I ever had in my life!" replied the happy girl, emphatically and truthfully.

## CHAPTER XXIV

## MARJORIE'S TRIUMPH

WHEN Mrs. Hadley afterwards spoke of Marjorie Wilkinson, she called her "the girl with the shining eyes." For when the machine stopped in front of the house in Trenton where she was visiting, and the young people ran up the steps to greet her, Marjorie was still radiant from her great discovery. For a time John's mother, who immediately took a tremendous liking to the girl, attributed her joy to anticipation of the pleasure that awaited her. But later she realized that the cause for it was something deeper, something within Marjorie's heart.

John, too, admitted reluctantly to himself that he was not a part of her happiness. It had, he realized, something to do with the Girl Scouts, and especially with her brief visit at that factory. But what it could possibly be, he had not the slightest idea.

The girls soon became entirely at home in their hostess's house, singing and playing the piano until it was time to dress for dinner.

When Marjorie came downstairs again, dressed in the pale blue georgette which she had worn at the sophomore reception, John Hadley thought he had never seen anyone so beautiful. Suddenly he realized, although he was only nineteen years of age, how tremendously he cared for this girl. Working hard all year, partially earning his way through college, he had little time to write to her; again he wondered what she had been doing, and whether any of the other Boy Scouts had claimed her attention. With a pang of jealousy, he became aware of the fact that she did not care for him as he did for her—to the exclusion of all others of the opposite sex. But John Hadley forgot that Marjorie was only sixteen—three years younger than himself.

Neither of the girls had ever attended a college function of any kind before, and they were thrilled with the experience. In spite of the fact that many of the other girls wore bobbed hair, and all had short skirts, they felt exceptionally youthful. Marjorie felt shy, too, and at the end of almost every dance she brought her partner over to Mrs. Hadley's corner, as if seeking her protection. The woman was subtly flattered; if Marjorie had tried to win her affection, she could not have chosen a more direct method. But she was all unconscious of the impression she was making.

Although the affair was not to be over until twelve, the boys had not filled out the girls' pro-

grams for the last dances. So, in accordance with Mrs. Wilkinson's wishes, they started for home in the machine by half-past eleven. To her surprise, Marjorie found that she was sleepy; and making no attempt at conversation, she leaned back against the cushions. In a few minutes she was fast asleep, her head resting against Mrs. Hadley's shoulder.

Sunday passed quickly for the girls, for they were both tired out, and their parents let them sleep late. At three o'clock they took the train for school.

"Nothing but rehearsals!" yawned Ruth. "Don't you wish the operetta were over?"

"Yes—and no," replied Marjorie, thinking of Frieda's promise. "I don't mind rehearsing much. But, then, I haven't a big part."

"No; neither you nor I can sing wonderfully, can we? But didn't it make you feel the least bit badly, Marj, after being heroine last year, to have to take a back seat this time?"

Marjorie regarded Ruth with curiosity. This, in a nutshell, summed up Ruth's character. She could never bear to "take a back seat."

"Not a bit! With basket-ball and everything, I was glad not to have to work so hard. And then I've got my canoe again, you know!"

"Thanks to me!" said Ruth, proudly.

"Thanks to father!" returned Marjorie, a little sharply. It was tiresome the way Ruth was always fishing for compliments.

"I say, though," observed Ruth, "I wish I could earn that medal for locating Frieda Hammer. It would be the first medal of merit in the troop!"

"Medal!" exclaimed Marjorie. "Goodness, I had forgotten all about it!"

"And had you forgotten all about her, too?"

"No, indeed," replied Marjorie, warmly. "She'll turn up some day. And if she does, Ruth, you've got to forget that she ever stole anything. For she's made it up, you know!"

Marjorie looked straight into Ruth's eyes, and seemed to pierce into the hidden motives of her life. Ruth lowered her lids under the penetrating gaze, and answered, somewhat doggedly,

"All right! Whatever you say!"

"Thanks, Ruth!"

The train arrived just on time and the girls went directly to their rooms. Marjorie proceeded to tell Lily all about the dance.

"Is that what makes you look so happy, Marj?"

"Partly; but there's something else, too."

"Don't you want to tell me about it?" This softly, without curiosity.

"I'm dying to, Lil; but I'm so afraid it won't come true, I just don't dare. It's too wonderful!"

"It's about Frieda."

"Lily Andrews!" cried Marjorie, aghast. "How did you ever guess it?"

"From your expression. I know you pretty well now, Marj!"

But Marjorie would not permit herself to tell even Lily; she had given her word to Frieda that she would keep it a secret, and she meant to keep her promise.

Saturday came with weather clear, warm, and beautiful. The operetta, which was really a spring festival, was to be given in the open-air amphitheater of the school, with the natural scenery of the woods and the lake for a background. The Scouts, in their filmy white and green costumes and flowing hair, looked like the fairy and wood-people they were to represent. Ethel Todd had the leading part; Ruth and Marjorie were merely in the chorus.

Marjorie dressed early, and, slipping a cape over her costume, went to meet each train. Finally, on the last one to arrive before the play was to begin, she was rewarded. A neat-looking Girl Scout in khaki uniform stepped from the train and hurried towards her.

It was Frieda Hammer!

The girls kissed each other and went up the walk arm in arm. Marjorie knew that Miss Phillips and most of the Scouts would be behind the scenes at that time, so she took Frieda straight to her mother and father. She merely introduced her as a "Girl Scout from Trenton," placed her beside her mother and Jack, and went back of the scenes.

"May we have a little meeting after the play?" she begged Miss Phillips. "Right here—it will only take a second! Oh, please!"

The Captain consented, for she was too busy to argue.

The operetta was charming, and splendidly performed; it was pronounced the prettiest thing ever given at Miss Allen's. During the intermission the Principal told the audience about the Scout canoe trip, stating that the proceeds from this play would be used to buy food, and that an anonymous friend had offered to supply the canoes.

After the final chorus was over, Marjorie appeared immediately—almost miraculously, it seemed to Frieda—among the audience, and sought her family. She was delighted to find Jack and Frieda laughing and chatting pleasantly, quite as if they had known each other all their lives. Could this be the same girl who had uttered such harsh words to Mrs. Johnson last fall, and slammed the door in their faces? She had changed utterly; suffering, responsibility, kindness, work, and the influence of the Girl Scout principles in her life had all helped to accomplish it.

"I want you to come back and meet the members of our troop," she said, taking Frieda's hand. "They are waiting—but they won't wait long."

She found the girls gathered around Miss Phillips, intoxicated with their success, but impatient of



the delay that kept them from joining their friends in the audience.

"Captain! Girls!" interrupted Marjorie, out of breath from her haste and excitement. "I want to introduce a Girl Scout from Pine Cone troop of Trenton. But," she added,—“first of all she belongs to Pansy troop. Miss Frieda Hammer!”

The girls could only gasp at these words; for it was not until after a second look that they recognized the country girl their troop had tried to adopt. The transformation was wonderful, the triumph complete! And they all realized that it was Marjorie's!

"And you're a second-class Scout!" cried Ethel, noticing the clover on her sleeve.

"And—own—a—pioneer—badge!" said Ruth, in amazement. "Why, you can go on the canoe trip!"

"I only won it last Saturday," said Frieda. "Oh, I should love to go on your canoe trip—but—I don't belong to Pansy troop!"

"You certainly do!" protested Lily.

"I tell you what I could do!" cried Frieda, with a flash of inspiration. "Do you need a cook?"

"Indeed we do," answered Miss Phillips. "I said only yesterday that we must get some one. Can you cook?"

"I think so!"

"Then you're hired!"

"Hurray for our new Scout!" they all cried, linking arms in a great chain.

"And for our 'Good Turn!'" exclaimed Ruth. "It's done at last."

"By Marjorie Wilkinson!" added Miss Phillips. Then, under her breath, "The Truest Girl Scout!"

The next volume in this series will tell of the Girl Scouts' Canoe Trip.

THE END



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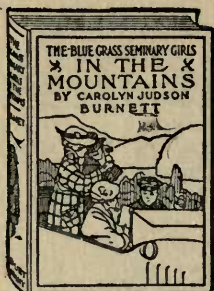
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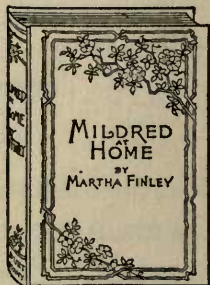
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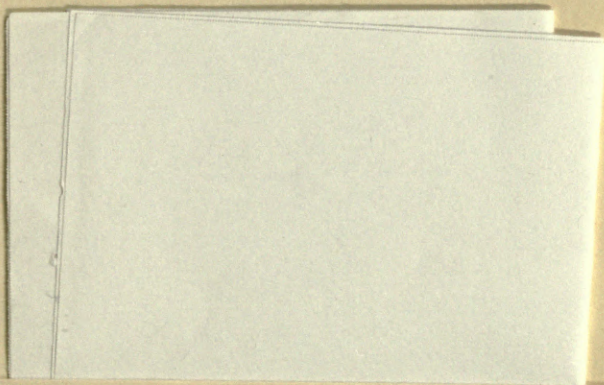
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